

Football FA Cup semi-final: Sheff Utd 0 Newcastle 1

## Shearer's touch of class is decisive

Michael Walker at Old Trafford

AT TIMES it was tense, at times it was unconvincing, there were even times when it looked as though it might not happen at all, but ultimately, as they say, class will prove decisive and a touch of it from Alan Shearer last Sunday delivered Newcastle United their first FA Cup final appearance since 1974.

The ghosts of the 3-0 mauling by Liverpool on that day may at last be laid to rest, similarly the ghosts of this season — Stevenage, Dublin, Marbella — that have turned Newcastle from the nation's favourite club to the butt of many a joke. But assuming Arsenal qualify for the Champions League, Newcastle are now in Europe, vying for a place in the Cup Winners' Cup.

On paper, even in terms of kits, Arsenal v Newcastle offers a classic final. But if Newcastle are to win it they will surely have to find someone apart from Shearer who can put the ball in the net when the opportunity arises. Andreas Andersson has not done that since his arrival from Aston Villa two months and seven games ago, and the Swede failed conspicuously to do so again.

Had he taken either of two glittering chances in the opening half-hour Newcastle's passage to Wembley would have been considerably smoother. Overall Newcastle were the better team, but the almu-

ness of their lead and Sheffield United's refusal to panic meant that the Northeast required an athletic fingertip save by Shay Given from Wayne Quinn's stooping header two minutes from time, and Nicos Dabizas's brave double block of Graham Stuart's shot to save their blushes.

Dabizas's intervention capped an impressive display by the recently signed Greek international but it was an indication of the Blades' threat that he was seen so frequently.

From the beginning there was a palpable sense of overbearing anxiety emanating from the 27,000 Georgians blanketing half of Old Trafford in black and white. The Sheffield multitude was full of vivid, colourful exuberance — and out-sang the Georgians throughout.

At the start of each half they had good reason. Bobby Ford, Sheffield's delicate midfield engineer, produced the game's first slippery shot in the fifth minute, and in the 50th Given made a stop from Quinn equal in quality to his save in the death. In the mêlée that followed, only a typically robust sliding tackle by Stuart Pearce foiled another Stuart attempt.

So the underdogs had their moments, yet it would be incorrect to say that Steve Thompson's side deserved to win.

Newcastle only truly settled after Andersson's 20th-minute run on



High five... Shearer celebrates his fifth goal in the FA Cup this season, pursued by David Batty

goal. David Batty manoeuvred it with a clever, fast pass that changed the angle of attack. Shearer flicked it on to Andersson but, just as it seemed he would shoot, the Swede fell over as Alan Kelly met him on the penalty spot, although a lucky deflection off Andersson still needed scooping off the line by Sandford.

Nilsen made the next goal-line clearance, soon afterwards, and Holdsworth provided a third before the interval. In between, a powerful header from Gary Speed clipped the woodwork and once Newcastle regained control 10 minutes into the second half the efforts continued to come.

On the hour, so did Shearer.

Speed did well on the left, slipping a neat ball between two defenders to Pearce; his curling centre was met by Shearer's forehead. Kelly parried but Shearer's sharpness brought him to the rebound ahead of all challengers.

It was his fifth FA Cup goal this season and, more importantly, his third winner. And never mind Wembley, it represented Newcastle's first victory at Old Trafford for 26 years.

Rangers will meet Hearts in the final of the Scottish Cup. They beat Celtic, their fiercest rivals, 2-1 at Celtic Park in the semi-final. In the other game Hearts triumphed over Falkirk 3-1, the Edinburgh side securing victory with two late goals.

Wolves 0 Arsenal 1

## Wreh lights the road to Wembley

David Lacey at Villa Park

ARSENAL continue to hunt the Double with an ever-widening net. At Villa Park last Sunday their fifth FA Cup victory in six games took them to their 13th FA Cup final. One early mistake and Wolverhampton Wanderers were done for.

Arsène Wenger now has a chance to become the third foreign manager in a year to lead a team to success in a Wembley final. Last season Roud Gullit, Chelsea won the FA Cup, and recently the Coca-Cola Cup, to Stamford Bridge under the auspices of Gianluca Vialli.

Wenger's Arsenal have played with the panache of Chelsea at their best, but their style is less likely to fall prey to violent swings of mood and form. He they were without the suspect, Dennis Bergkamp and the injured Ian Wright, but they still controlled large areas of the game once Christopher Wreh had given them the lead in the 12th minute.

In the quarter-final Wolves had pulled off the surprise of a hitherto predictable FA Cup winning 1-0 at Leeds. Against Arsenal they employed similar methods but came no closer to repeating their triumph of Elland Road than a flurry of activity early in the second half.

Wolves never did have much luck huffing and puffing at houses of bricks and Arsenal have seldom been built of anything else. Patrick Vieira was their cornerstone. He has all the hustle and bustle of Arsenal midfielders from way back, but difference is that, compared with many of them, he has the sureness of touch to keep possession and the vision to make his passes tell.

Mark McGhee's induction into the National League team over really came to grips with the domination of the game between the penalty areas. Having lost Simon Osborn, who had done much to win them command of the midfield at Leeds, through suspension, Wolves hoped that the experience of Steve Sedgwick would restrict Vieira's ability to bring the ball out of defence and set up attacks. This proved a mite optimistic.

Wolves' best chances were confined to the opening 20 minutes of the second half. A shot from Paul Simpson was dropped by David Seaman but dropped too awkward an angle for Steve Clarke to score from the rebound, and later another rebound away from Clarke with the Arsenal goalkeeper out of position.

Afterwards Wenger admitted that he became a little nervous at Arsenal's failure to turn the possession into more goals. He their strength in defence and Bergkamp is carrying them towards a mighty season's climax and Bergkamp will soon be back.

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Week ending April 19, 1998

Fears of violence and dissent follow euphoria at Ulster agreement

## Mitchell warns of terrorist threat to Irish peace deal

John Mullin and Ewen MacAskill

GEORGE MITCHELL, who brokered last week's momentous deal among Northern Ireland's political parties, warned last Sunday that extremists will engage in a campaign of violence in an attempt to scupper the agreement.

Mr Mitchell, a former United States senator, raised the spectre of the Irish National Liberation Army and the Loyalist Volunteer Force, which are both opposed to the current ceasefire, embarking on a killing spree to destroy the settlement announced on Good Friday.

He fears that the aim of the hard-line groups is to suck the mainstream paramilitary organisations back into terrorism ahead of the referendum on the deal, which is due to take place in Ulster and in the Irish Republic on May 22.

"There are people on both sides who want to disrupt the process, who are committed to the way of violence, and will step up their activities now, at the time of the referendum, and thereafter," he said. "My hope is that it won't destabilise the process."

Tony Blair echoed his comments, warning of difficult weeks ahead. The British prime minister, who with his Irish counterpart, Bertie Ahern, spent three days and nights hammering the deal in Belfast, said: "What we have done so far has pleased people, and if people exercise vision and imagination then it can be done. There is no doubt about that because the principles of this are right."

As the euphoria that greeted Good Friday's announcement began to fade, the Sinn Féin president,

Gerry Adams, and the leader of the Ulster Unionists, David Trimble, were facing a critical week. Both must battle to sell the agreement to their grassroots supporters.

Mr Trimble is trying to contain a growing revolt among his parliamentary colleagues. Six of his fellow nine Ulster Unionist MPs are opposed to the deal. The real threat to Mr Trimble comes from Jeffrey Donaldson, the 35-year-old MP for Lagan Valley. Mr Donaldson, seen as a future leader, stormed out of the conference room to deliver his agreement, and voted against it at an Ulster Unionist meeting last Saturday. But after a lengthy four-hour meeting of the executive Mr Trimble carried the day by 55 to 23.

The real crunch comes this Saturday, when his 800-strong ruling council delivers its verdict. Defeat for Mr Trimble would scupper the deal. It would also finish him as leader, a fate that befell his predecessor Brian Faulkner when he signed the ill-fated Sunningdale agreement in 1973.

Unionists are uneasy over proposals for cross-border institutions, an accelerated programme to release convicted terrorists, and fears that Sinn Féin members could be part of a new assembly without any IRA guns being handed over.

Meanwhile the IRA delivered a wait-and-see response to an agreement that falls short of Sinn Féin's minimum requirements. It said: "We will judge it against its potential to deliver a just and durable peace to our country."

Mr Adams, addressing a rally at Carrickmore, Co Tyrone, to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising,

indicated that he believed the armed phase of the republican struggle was over. "When I pay tribute to the IRA soldiers, I pay tribute not just to their role when they make war, but also to their role when they provide the opportunity for making peace."

The Sinn Féin leadership faces two critical tests of its strategy in the wake of the Stormont deal. After an executive meeting, the annual conference takes place in Dublin this weekend with republican splinter groups predicting mass defections.

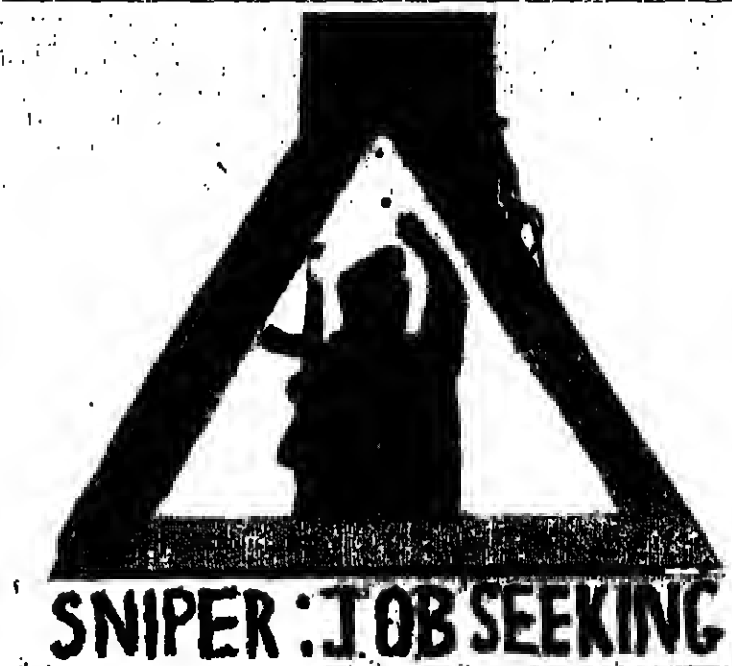
Even so, it was a very special Good Friday. Mr Blair, sustained on a diet of no sleep, tea and snacks, announced an historic deal while the hailstones fell. Wan but delighted, he said he hoped 30 years of violence were at last over.

This was his finest day as prime minister. No one had dared believe it possible that Ulster Unionists and Sinn Féin, along with six parties between them, would agree a deal after 22 months of negotiations.

The settlement provides for an assembly in Northern Ireland, raising the possibility of Mr Trimble and Mr Adams sitting alongside each other in a power-sharing executive. There will be cross-border authorities and a Council of Ministers. Relationships involving Belfast, Dublin, London and the Scottish and Welsh assemblies are to be recast.

The jail doors are to open for paramilitary prisoners. Sentence remission will be increased from 50 per cent to two-thirds, meaning half of Northern Ireland's 530 convicted terrorists will soon be released — most within the next two years.

Agreement was sealed only with the intervention of President Bill



SNIPER: JOB SEEKING

Basbrook Community Centre

An IRA sign near Crossmaglen that used to say 'Sniper at work' reflects the new mood of hope in Ireland

PHOTO: PAUL MEERLANE

Clinton, who spoke to participants through Thursday night last week. He said: "The task facing people in Northern Ireland will be to make the peace endure. It will be difficult. But they have chosen hope over hate, and the promise of the future over the poison of the past."

The Irish prime minister, Mr

Ahern, still wearing a black tie after the funeral of his mother, admitted that it had been a difficult week, but said: "I am sure my mother would have been pleased that we made so much progress."

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Disarmament of paramilitary weapons

Changes

Irish Republic will hold referendum on amending articles two and three of its constitution, which lay claim to the territory of Northern Ireland.

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## 2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### West should look to itself in light of Asian crises

**T**HE collapse of the Japanese economy will not only threaten any Asian recovery, but will leave Britain more vulnerable to Japanese pull-outs should significant overseas funds be repatriated to cope with its own debt-laden crisis (Editorial, April 12).

The penny is beginning to drop that dependence on foreign capital leads to financial vulnerability, threatens domestic jobs and stokes up global deflation. It is time the gentleman who supposedly directs Britain's economy, Gordon Brown, realised that to weather the storm of inadequate demand and rising unemployment, control over your own economy is a key defence.

Colin Hines,  
Twickenham, Middlesex

**C**RISES are inevitable in "gangster economies" such as Japan and Russia, where the value of the population's work in creating wealth in the real economy is siphoned off via the money economy. Japanese finance houses have extended billions in unsecured loans to dubious characters.

Britain has had its share of such scams — from Nick Leeson to the Cayman and Channel Island tax havens — where money lost by a bank or brokerage magically pops up in a chain of shops in Tokyo or a beach bar in Bermuda, neatly laundered via a metals futures dealer in South Africa.

Collapse is threatened when it dawns on the majority of honest, hard-working citizens that, despite good work, productivity and commitment, their security diminishes while predatory parasites get richer and richer. They realise their work-

ing lives have been stolen; motivation to participate in the hopeless game is reduced, and the economy winds down.

If the banking community will it, well-programmed, powerful computers could ensure that the money economy always accurately reflects the real economy and that sticky fingers are removed from the global cash-register. It is not too late for Japan to publicly track down such funds and restore national confidence in the value of thrift and work.

Noel Hudson,  
Oxford

**T**HE Nobel prize-winner Jose Ramos Horta has called for Western pressure on President Suharto, but in asking the West to demand that Indonesia undergo political reforms, he is being either naïve or overly optimistic. No Western economic rescue package for Indonesia is likely to include demands for a guarantee of independent trade unions, freedom from censorship or the liberation of political prisoners. The West wants a stable Indonesia — how else can it afford to buy its weapons? — not a democratic one.

(Dr) Jeff Haynes,  
London

**G**EOFFREY ZYGIER claims that Western foreign policy decisions are made according to which other nations are more reliable and honourable — more "like us" (April 5). What nonsense. Foreign policy decisions are made in the light of self-interest. Western nations ask themselves, "Which of these dictators/blackguards/maniacs will do

us the least harm?", or "What will we gain most by supporting?"

A shocking example is the support of successive Australian governments for Indonesian annexation of East Timor. This behaviour is, in effect, an appeasement of Indonesia because Australian governments are scared of their military might. Indeed, we even help to train them.

There is also the not insignificant matter of oil reserves in the region. Self-interest triumphs over reliability and honour. We forget this at our peril.

Bob Holderness-Roddam,  
Austins Ferry, Tasmania, Australia

### Disquiet on the Preston front

**N**OTHING is so deeply offensive to the people of another country as comments such as Peter Preston's: "The United States is not a society like ours, peopled by men and women like us. It is a deeply foreign land, and — in that sense — deeply alien" (Little Rock seems closer than Calais, April 5).

In Australia "racism" includes the belief that people of another country are different, usually worse, on the basis of their nationality. In that sense Preston's article is deeply racist. In fact the US is too subtle for him. In most of what he writes, he artlessly condemns Britain — not the US.

America has many cultures. If Britain chooses to embrace the fake one from Hollywood or a violent one found among the plebeian inhabitants of rural Arkansas, that reflects on the British media, not Americans. And another thing: George Mitchell is a distinguished American who could have served on the Supreme Court. Your correspondent, it seems, is as racist as well as xenophobic.

Robert Briggs,  
Lyons, ACT, Australia

**T**HANK you Peter Preston for your article. Its contents need constant reiteration if we are not to become a quaint little island off the "Greater American Empire".

Eddie Naisby,  
Ruthin, Wales

### Zimbabwe still in thrall to whites

**I**T is shameful the way whites have blatantly changed the rules whenever the tide of history has moved against them. As Zimbabweans now being persuaded that it is morally defensible for 0.04 per cent of the population to get costly on more than 50 per cent of all fertile land while 80 per cent of its citizens are holed up in the sandy and rocky areas assigned to them by colonial settlers? Is this the heritage bestowed on whites by the so-called Right of Conquest? If it is, then surely those who successfully re-conquered should enjoy the same privilege.

But Zimbabwe continues to compromise its dignity for the sake of foreign aid and foreign investment. Until self-respect is salvaged, it does not matter how much aid is received: a sense of insecurity will guarantee that the majority will always be tethered to the apron-strings of the great, benevolent white master. This is evident throughout Africa.

Economic development has

much less to do with manipulation of fancy economic ratios than with maximising resource-use for the good of the majority.

Zimbabwe's main problem (and that of countries throughout Africa), is one of failing to address grassroots fundamentals, preferring instead to be side-tracked by lofty notions of foreign investor confidence as if we cannot empower our own people to be investors. There is such a thing as domestic-led growth. It is about time Zimbabweans and all Africans deliberately moved away from the "foreign is better and right in everything" mindset and cultivated some confidence in themselves.

Havanyani Matswane,  
Harare, Zimbabwe

### Upsetting the natural balance

**M**ARK COCKER says that it is unfair to blame the British for the release of the European starling into the United States (Starlings in the ascendency, February 22). The only really unfair thing was his knee-jerk dumping on starlings for their successful colonisation. The parochial woodpecker-kicked-out-of-the-cactus and eating-at-the-chicken-feed anecdotes are typical of local incidents blown up out of proportion by statist naturalists, yearning for US wildlife to revert to some unspecified Eden where all original species are eternally native.

The introduction of non-native species is insignificant compared with man's gargantuan butchery of animal habitats. Increasingly, scientific evidence strongly suggests this to be the real problem. When man does his mindless thing, native species often have a tough time adapting; indeed, some become extinct. Other species that can adapt — non-natives among them — move in.

Clearly, the cause of native species would be much better served if the likes of your correspondent worked to mitigate the impact of man.

(Dr) Christopher Pantan,  
Danville, California, USA

**I** WAS disappointed to see the Guardian Weekly using emotive and irrational language in dealing with a serious conservation problem (Lustful duck faces "avian genocide", March 1). The proposed culling of 3,500 feral ducks in the UK to save a whole species (the white-headed duck) from extinction is an unpleasant job, but a necessary one. It has nothing to do with "eugenics", "racism" or "genocide", and everything to do with the conservation of biodiversity. To put the figure into perspective, every year more than 1 million ducks are shot for "sport" in the UK.

(Dr) Andy J Green,  
Seville, Spain

**I**N STATING that hares often do best in areas where they are most frequently hunted, Mark Cocker (A history of hare loss, March 22) is perpetuating a frequent claim of hare-couriers. However, I welcome his mention of the brutality of hare-couriers. Until Parliament backs a bill to outlaw the hunting of wild animals with dogs, these cruel and damaging sports will continue and the sight of a March hare, so vividly described by him, will become increasingly rare.

Rachel Chapman,  
Cranbrook, Kent

## Briefly

**PAULINE** Melville's question on the similarity in "dynastic politics" between India's Italian-born Sonia Gandhi and Guyana's American-born Janet Jagan is misplaced (March 29). Unlike Gandhi, Jagan had played numerous active political roles while her husband, Cheddi, was alive. Cheddi Jagan summarised her career in a short sentence in his book *The West on Trial: My Fight for Guyana's Freedom*: "At one and the same time, she combined three jobs — housewife, party secretary and minister." In the past she has held the ministerial portfolios of home affairs and of labour, health and housing. She was also once named deputy Speaker. Whereas, until recently, Sonia Gandhi's role was that of a housewife of a prominent politician. She did not even become an Indian citizen until after Rajiv Gandhi had settled down as prime minister. (Prof) Robt Chakravarti,  
Sacramento, California, USA

**BINYAMIN** Netanyahu's spokesman is quoted as saying that the European approach is "so pro-Palestinian and one-sided" that the only possible mediator is the United States (March 15). The latter, of course, is so even-handed that it has shelled out billions of dollars to support Israel and to provide the arms and ammunition that have found their targets in Palestinian bodies. (R M) Troshnikov,  
Birchgrove, NSW, Australia

**I** CAN understand what is meant by a brilliant mathematician or a brilliant composer, but what is a "brilliant gynaecologist" (April 5)? (Dr) Paul Scotti,  
Auckland, New Zealand

**RICHARD** TILT argues that black people are more likely to suffer positional asphyxia than whites and that the causes are physiological (April 5). He's right. People with black skins rather than white in physiological difference are indeed more likely to be strangled by prison officers. Or have I misunderstood him? (Ray Smith,  
London

**I** WAS fascinated to read that 29.48 per cent of Brussels firemen will in future be Flemish (April 5). Assuming we're talking unit-firemen, I calculate that future platoons must incorporate exactly 1,273 men each of which 51 will be Flemish. This works out at 29.4798 per cent, or 29.48 per cent if we're being slapdash and rounding off to two decimal places. These European Commission directives must be catching. (Paul Clark,  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
April 19 1998

## Students join fray in Iran crisis

David Hirst in Beirut and agencies

**I**RANIAN students called off a planned protest at Tehran university on Monday in support of the city's jailed mayor, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, which feuding moderate and hardline clerics had warned could lead to a violent confrontation.

Student backers of the moderate president, Mohammad Khatami, had called the demonstration to support both the president and Mr Karbaschi against the dominant conservatives, headed by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Like other moderates, the students see the mayor's arrest as a purely political "coup", an attempt to "bring down the government". The interior minister, Abdolnour Nouri, a Khatamiist, was reported to have given the students permission to stage their protest. But, in a sign of confusion in high places, the

cabinet urged them to call it off so as to "safeguard social tranquillity". Reza Burbur, a spokesman for the students' Unity Consolidation Bureau, said the protest was cancelled "to honour the request of the government as well as the president".

Meanwhile another student group called a pro-government protest on Tuesday at the university in the southern city of Shiraz.

The cancellation of the Tehran protest came as the government newspaper Iran suggested that the mayor, arrested on April 4 on corruption charges, may soon be released.

Government leaders from both factions have met twice since the arrest to search for ways to resolve the dispute with Ayatollah Khamenei.

The arrest and planned trial of the mayor has emerged as the most serious episode yet in the power struggle between moderate re-

formists and conservatives. Neither side's leader has taken a public position, striving to resolve the crisis behind the scenes. But with public opinion largely rallying to the moderates, the affair has become a symbolic trial of strength which neither can afford to lose.

Only Mr Karbaschi's release would satisfy the moderates, but Ayatollah Khamenei would be loath to permit it. On the other hand, the trial of one of his key supporters would not only humiliate President Khatami, it would also guarantee the escalation of the crisis, leading to public disturbances and their suppression by security forces under conservative control.

Even if the big three hammer out some face-saving compromise, it can be only a short-term solution.

Supporters of the influential and irrepressible Ayatollah Montazeri, under house arrest in Qum, are again agitating on his

behalf. The national security council is warning them to stop.

The crisis has aggravated personal, political and constitutional conflicts at the heart of a regime in which the Khatamists are mainly represented in a cabinet that has little or no jurisdiction over state institutions still in the grip of the conservatives.

The moderates enjoy growing support from public opinion. Nearly 700 mayors called on President Khatami to "prevent honest officials from being sacrificed to partisan political goals".

Even some conservative mullahs have come out against the judiciary. Ayatollah Khashani warned that "any escalation of the crisis would be like presenting our enemies with a petrol canister to set alight".

He is ready to take to the streets. The interior minister has set up a "committee for the defence of Karbaschi", and called for a referendum.

## Palestinian police seize Hamas killer

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

**P**ALESTINIAN police last week-end arrested a leading Islamist militant suspected of killing the Hamas master bomber Muhi al-Din Shari' as friction between Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority and the fundamentalists increased.

Imad Awadallah was captured at a café in the West Bank city of Ramallah. This morning he was seized by colleagues in the [Hamas] cell of killing Shari', said Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, a senior aide to Mr Arafat who is heading the inquiry into Shari's death.

Shari', who was accused by Israel of masterminding a string of suicide bombings, was found dead beside an exploded "car-bomb" Ramallah — two weeks ago.

Mr Awadallah is suspected of shooting Shari' before another Hamas member, Ghassan al-Adadi, allegedly booby-trapped the car to explode three hours later, a Palestinian official said. Mr Adadi is one of several members of Hamas's armed wing, Izzedine al-Qassam, arrested in a Palestinian crackdown since Shari's death.

"The security apparatus has questioned [Awadallah] and now we have further direct confirmation that Shari' was shot dead before the car exploded," Mr Abdel-Rahim said.

The Palestinian Authority claims that Shari' was killed in an internal Hamas power struggle. The group denies this, accusing the authority of collaborating with Israel in Shari's murder.

In a leaflet faxed to Reuters news agency in Jerusalem, Hamas demanded the release of its members and accused the authority of using the detainees to try to "silence" it. The authority closed down Reuters' office in Gaza last week because it had published Hamas statements. Hundreds of Hamas activists demonstrated in the West Bank city of Nablus last week-end, calling for attacks against Israel.

Netanyahu's view, page 16

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS 3

### The Week

**T**HE US tobacco industry walked away from a settlement with the government over smoking-related lawsuits estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars. It claimed the deal would bankrupt leading companies. Washington Post, page 16

**T**ROOPS led by Nato arrested two Bosnian Serbs, Miroslav Kvocka and Mladen Radic, both indicted in 1995 for crimes against civilian prisoners at Omarska detention camp.

**N**EARLY 100 civilians and Muslim rebels were killed in Algeria during celebrations of the Muslim Feast of Sacrifice.

**S**ERGEI LAVROV, Russia's foreign minister, was expected to win greater support than expected in his first, unsuccessful attempt to be confirmed as Russia's prime minister. His nomination was expected to be put to a fresh vote this week.

**M**ANUEL PÉREZ MARTÍNEZ, a defrocked Spanish priest and one of Latin America's most charismatic guerrilla leaders, died of hepatitis in Colombia at the age of 62. His death was announced in the week which 36 people were killed in fighting between the army and rebels.

**M**ORE THAN 90 miners were feared dead in northern Tanzania after flash floods caused pits to collapse.

**A**T LEAST 41 people were killed as tornadoes and thunderstorms, fed partly by El Niño, blasted across three states in the southeastern US. Washington Post, page 16

**L**AWYERS for P W Botha were trying to arrange a deal to let South Africa's last apartheid-era president appear before a unique private sitting of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, hours before his scheduled court appearance for refusing to testify.

**A** BOMB exploded in a park in the heart of Istanbul's tourist district, wounding nine people.

**M**ALAYSIA, hit hard by a water shortage in the capital Kuala Lumpur, is now struggling to deal with fires breaking out in many parts of the country because of drought.

**F**ATHER Patrick Sullivan, the only Roman Catholic priest from the US resident in Cuba, says he is being forced to leave his parish after falling foul of government authorities.

**A** LEADING environmental group, the World Wide Fund for Nature, criticised Japan for killing 440 whales for scientific research.



Ugandan soldiers train in the early morning in Gulu, headquarters of government efforts to hold off attacks from rebel groups, some based across the border in Congo. PHOTOGRAPH BY BENNAN LINSLEY

## Rebels unite to threaten Museveni

Anna Borzello in Kampala

**A** COALITION force of Ugandan rebels, Sudanese government troops and former fighters of the ousted Zairian president, Mobutu Sese Seko, is operating from bases in Garamba National Park in Congo, according to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Garamba, in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo, borders Sudan to the north and is 100km from the Ugandan border.

The source said the force comprised 3,000 ex-Mobutu troops, 1,500 Ugandan rebels and several hundred SPLA deserters and Sudanese government troops.

The claim was confirmed by Uganda's acting defence minister, Major-General Salim Saleh. "We know they are in the park. We are tracking their movements," he said.

The SPLA source said the Mobutu supporters fled to Garamba in February 1997 after their defeat by the forces of President Laurent Kabila, who seized the capital, Kinshasa, three months later.

The Sudanese soldiers and Ugandan rebels joined the group in March 1997, after a joint SPLA and Ugandan government offensive in South Sudan captured the

Uganda/Sudan border for the SPLA.

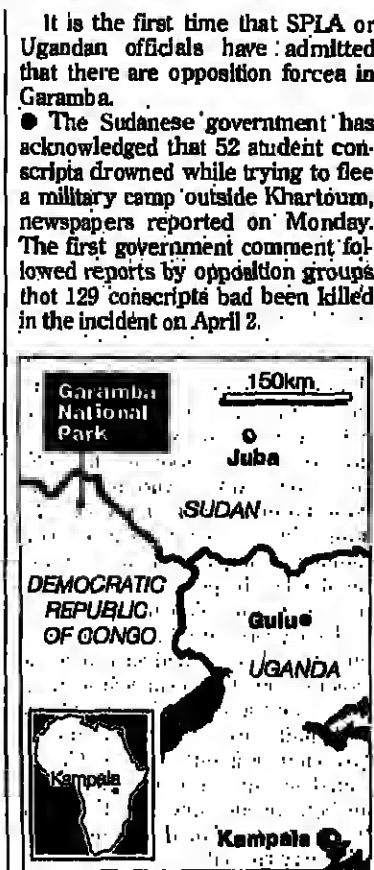
During the March offensive the Sudanese bases of the Ugandan rebel West Nile Bank Front were destroyed. Hundreds of WBNF rebels were killed and more than 1,000 surrendered. But 1,500 rebels and several hundred Sudanese government soldiers escaped to Garamba.

The source said that although the three factions in Garamba had different goals, Sudan's National Islamic Front (NIF) government had been able to co-ordinate their activities.

In December the leaders of the three factions flew to Sudan's capital, Khartoum, where they agreed to unite to attack the SPLA rear bases. In return, the NIF government has agreed to help WBNF rebels overthrow Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, and to help Mobutu's supporters to oust Mr Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Since the start of the year there have been airdrops into Garamba by Sudanese government Antonov jets, the source said.

The NIF government hopes that by destabilising Uganda and its allies in the Great Lakes region it will be able to destroy support for the SPLA, which has been fighting domination by the Islamist North since 1993.









## Americans reluctant to pay their dues



### Washington diary

Martin Kettle

**T**HIS WEEK means only one thing for most adult Americans. It is the week in which they must pay their taxes. And since paying taxes is something the average American does with singular ill grace, this week also underlines one of the most important differences between civil society in the United States and its counterparts in many other parts of the world.

You do not need to live, work and pay taxes in the US to know the importance that hostility to tax has played in the country's history. This is a nation that was born out of a tax revolt against the British — and it still shows. The confidence and power of anti-tax movements has been a leitmotif of political life in the United States on many occasions since the Boston Tea Party.

In Britain, attitude surveys have repeatedly shown that large majorities of the population believe in the principle of redistributive taxation. Even during the anti-tax Thatcher years, the reliable British Social Attitudes Survey found a steady increase in the proportion of voters who said they would be willing to pay more taxes in order to improve public services and to help the least well-off. In the US, however, the reverse is true. This month an opinion poll for Fox TV found US opinion divided roughly two-to-one against a



similar "pay more and get more" proposition. It was appropriate that Fox should have carried this report, because the station's owner, Rupert Murdoch, has long been an enthusiastic no-payer of tax. Yet the resentment that runs through much of the popular discussion of taxation is predicated on the same belief — that most people either approve of taxation nor are willing to pay what they really owe.

The hostility that Americans direct toward their tax collection agency, the Internal Revenue Service, is immediately striking to anyone who is more familiar with British attitudes. The British are, at most, resignedly world-weary towards the Inland Revenue. Modern Americans, though, really hate the IRS. Granted, there are differences, and some of the inquisitorial activities of the IRS that were detailed in evidence to Congress last year were

at times more than hair-raising. Nevertheless these incidents cannot adequately explain the language and tone in which US politicians, media and ordinary citizens discuss the service.

Americans talk about the IRS as though it is a secret police force. They talk about the fear that it engenders in them, about the threat that it embodies, and about the importance — and the difficulty — of standing up to it. The language that even mainstream Americans routinely use to describe the IRS is not dissimilar to the loathing formerly directed towards the KGB.

In his recent book *Those Dirty Rotten Taxes*, the economic historian Charles Adams approvingly reprints a cartoon that shows three "terrorists": an Arab gunman, an Irish bomber and an IRS man in a suit carrying nothing more lethal than his briefcase.

Another equally tendentious but undeniably effective recent book about the IRS by Shelley Davis is entitled *Unbridled Power*. Both the cartoon and the title accurately represent what a significant proportion, possibly a majority, of Americans believe. The resentment against unbridled power is not proportional to the level of taxation or to the state of the economy.

The IRS is owed more than \$80 billion in unpaid taxes, and has calculated that 17 cents of every tax dollar that Americans owe is never paid. This is mostly because rich business people overstate their tax deductible expenses or because the black economy continues to thrive. Significantly, the proportion of unpaid taxes is not thought to have altered much during the past 20 years.

What has changed, however, is the public acceptability of attacking

the principles and practices of the tax system.

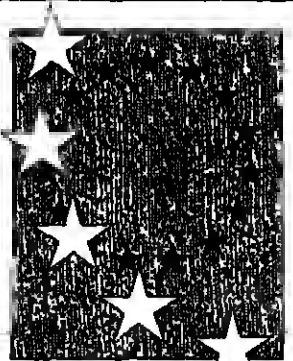
The revolt against tax was at the heart of the Reagan revolution of the 1980s. It was a crucial factor in the unseating of George Bush, who had told the voters in 1988 that he was a true believer — "No New Taxes" — but had discovered too late that tax is not an attitude of mind but an instrument of macro-economic and social policy. And it continues to drive the increasingly confused Republican revolution of the 1990s. The Texas Republican Bill Archer, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, is leading the fight to abolish income tax and says that the IRS must be "torn out by the roots". Republican presidential hopefuls are increasingly driven to outbid one another with "radical" tax plans that shift wealth from the poor to the rich and further.

All of this has provided a basic constraint on the politics of the Clinton presidency. Just as he was forced, against his own instincts, to tack to the right on the role of government, so the same is true of his policy on tax. But whereas he has found ways of reinventing and restoring faith in government, Clinton has not succeeded in reinventing or restoring faith in taxation. If anything, the reverse has happened.

Early in his presidency Clinton at least used to attack tax loopholes and the culture of tax cheating. In the boom years of late 1990s America, when the pressure for spending is lessened, there isn't much of an attempt to pursue that target any longer. As the Washington Post pointed out last week: "There is a strong link between tax evasion and mistrust of government."

Above the entrance of the US headquarters in Washington the words to Oliver Wendell Holmes are carved in stone: "Taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society." This is not a view that plays well with today's swing voters. But it is true. One day, when the economic boom falters, the US is going to have to challenge the inherited assumptions that tax is bad and that tax-cheating is acceptable. But not, one senses, just yet.

## Black and white economies divide EU



### Europe this week

Martin Walker

**T**HE EUROPEAN Union has just learnt that it is more than \$1,000 billion richer than it thought it was. Its total gross domestic product may be poised to reach \$10,000 billion a year. It all depends on the accuracy of new estimates for the size of Europe's underground, undeclared and unmeasured economy.

High levels of taxation and regulation have driven Europe to develop a massive black economy, the European Commission reported last week. It is equivalent in size to

Britain's gross domestic product, and employs up to 28 million people. By contrast, the official total of the EU's unemployed is 17.5 million. This alternative economy is distorting tax, welfare and financial systems, and is inflicting unemployment rates across the continent.

According to the report, which was prepared as part of a series of surveys of the EU labour market, after the EU Jobs Summit in Luxembourg last year, up to one-third of the Greek economy, and up to a quarter of the Italian and Spanish economies, are operating on a strictly cash basis. Britain is estimated to be about average among the 15 EU countries, with a black economy of around 10 per cent — but as much as 13 per cent may be off the books.

Eurostat, the EU's statistical arm, is now working on a new GDP model that will take account of all the plumbers, waiters and cleaning ladies who work strictly for cash, and of the double book-keeping that helps ease Europe's tax burden.

The implications of the EU findings are profound. Since almost half the money paid into the EU budget by each member state is based on GDP figures, Greece, Spain and

Italy are underpaying by nearly \$16 billion a year. And, because EU structural fund payments are calculated in part on local unemployment rates, these countries are receiving more than their fair share from the Community budget.

Moreover once the new GDP figures are available, United States officials can start to demand that Europe's payments to international bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund should be revised upwards. The arguments within the Nato alliance about burden-sharing will also take on a new edge.

Characteristically, the EU is deeply ambivalent about the correct policy response. "The strategy now provides an opportunity for combating undeclared work through EU co-ordinated action, if this is deemed necessary," said the EU's employment commissioner, Padraig Flynn, in classic bureaucratic language.

Under the traditional European social model this strategy would involve more tax inspection and more rules to clamp down on the black economy. But that may be shooting the messenger. The Com-

mission appears to accept that the thriving underground economy is a rational response to the overtaxed and over-regulated European system.

But it also warns of the social costs of the underground boom. "The situation is particularly damaging for undeclared workers who are officially 'inactive', as they forgo all the benefits derived from working with a formal contract, such as training, a specific career profile, pay rises, ultimately harming their employability and job prospects," according to the Commission.

So while the black economy is seen as a rational, and even inevitable, response to rigid labour markets and high taxes, the Commission reckons that it damages the broader social and economic factors.

In short the black economy once again raises the traditional tension between the low tax and deregulated Anglo-Saxon model that produces lots of jobs but wide income disparities, and the European social model that levies high taxes on those in work to finance the welfare state for the rest.

But there is a subtle twist to the argument. Advocates of the European social model can argue that there is no evidence that high taxes necessarily spur the black market.

Finland, Denmark, Austria and Sweden have the smallest black economies even though they have some of the highest tax rates in Europe. This, however, steers the argument into the murky waters of national and regional characteristics, and stereotypes, of the law-abiding north against the cheating south.

The figures for the black economy are estimated by the Commission on the basis of national reports and analyses. The figures are likely to prove controversial, particularly in Greece, Italy and Spain, because they could be used to increase payments to and cut their receipts from Europe. There will be some furious arguments in Luxembourg where the Eurostat statisticians will have to come up with an acceptable way of measuring something which, by definition, defies conventional statistical tools.

On the brighter side it all means that the EU economy is bigger, and healthier than was previously thought as it heads into the era of the new single currency. Europe also learned last week that the euro will be launched by a rising tide of industrial production, growing at an average 1.3 per cent across the EU, while unemployment across the continent is dropping, most sharply among the young.

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## Blood service chief sacked for high costs and poor results

Ewen MacAskill  
and Sarah Boasley

THE HEAD of the National Blood Authority, Sir Colin Walker, was sacked by the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, last week following a damning report into the performance of the body that runs the transfusion service.

Mr Dobson's action came amid a crisis of confidence in the service and fears for the blood supply. He was "concerned about the overall performance of the authority" and said that those at the top of the organisation had to take responsibility.

Sir Colin, who had refused to resign from the £10,000-a-year part-time job as chairman of the NBA, was a Tory appointee and presided over a period of reorganisation bitterly opposed by health professionals, unions and MPs.

He said: "I decline to comment, I don't think it will help the blood service by anybody making any comments other than to encourage the team in all its efforts. It doesn't worry me unduly what people say about me."

The NBA has been repeatedly criticised for spending much more money now than it did before the reforms began three years ago but delivering a poorer service. Although it stated there would be no shortages, blood stocks fell to dangerously low levels both last winter and the winter before.

Last autumn Mr Dobson ordered an investigation by Professor John Cash, a former president of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. His report said: "The NBA's reorganisation policies and

their implementation have resulted in considerable damage to this much-loved and respected people's service." Mr Dobson described the report as a "damning indictment".

Professor Cash looked in particular at the transfer of bulk processing and testing of blood from Liverpool to Manchester, which became the sole centre for northwest England. He said that there was a serious crisis and widespread loss of confidence in the NBA, which had become isolated to a disturbing degree from operational realities.

Sir Colin will be replaced by Mike Fogden, former chief executive of the Employment Service. Mr Fogden was appointed by the Conservative government, a point that headed off Tory criticism that Mr Dobson was replacing Conservative placemen with Labour ones. It will be for Mr Fogden to decide whether the chief executive, John Adey, should also be sacked.

Mr Dobson said he had called in Sir Colin to say he was concerned about the authority's performance. "I explained that in view of the extra difficulties which the blood service is likely to face, I was not confident, in the light of past performance, that it was in the interests of the NHS for him to remain in the chair of the NBA."

He added: "He has refused to resign. Today I have dismissed him." Dr Evan Harris, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, said: "This confirms that the Tory 'rationalisation' of England's health services was a disaster. The service is now more inefficient than it was before Tory health ministers started meddling with it."

## 'Reward' for hospitals

David Brindle

THE Government set up a £32 million "performance fund" last week to reward health authorities that successfully cut hospital waiting lists — and to pay for task forces to help those not doing enough.

The move came as a leading health economist warned that patients were waiting longer for treatment and that the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, faced an uphill task to meet his target of cutting the numbers waiting in England by 100,000 before next April.

John Appleby, senior lecturer in health economics at the University of East Anglia, said a 10-year fall in the number of patients waiting more than a year for treatment had been reversed by an 18 per cent increase since last March. He said: "If anything is to blame, it is probably that the NHS — from ministers down — took their collective eye off the ball."

Health authorities and hospitals would have to achieve unprecedented results to make "a significant dent" in the country's waiting list of almost 1.3 million patients, Mr Appleby said. "Even after September 1996, when the health service treated a record number of people from the waiting list, the number waiting still went up by nearly 100,000 the following March."

Of the extra £500 million in NHS funding announced in last month's Budget, £320 million is going towards cutting waiting lists in England to below the 1.2 million

inherited from the previous government. Mr Dobson announced last week that £288 million of the English money would be distributed among health authorities to help them reach agreed waiting-list targets, and £32 million held centrally in a performance fund.

The fund would be used to give individual authorities further sums or "rewards" of up to 10 per cent of their initial allocations if they exceeded their targets. It would also be used to fund remedial action by task forces. "That could include sending into health authorities and NHS trusts teams of managers and clinicians," he said.

Authorities have until April 24 to agree on plans for cutting waiting lists. The £288 million will then be shared out between them.

Researchers say they have evidence of systematic racial and sexual discrimination in the NHS. Female nurses progress more slowly up the promotion ladder than do men despite making up a disproportionate number of the profession, according to a study by Stephen Padney and Michael Shields, of the University of Leicester. As a result, their lifetime earnings are much lower. The discrepancy can total £50,000 over the course of a career — almost enough to buy an average house.

Black and Asian nurses, also over-represented in the profession, suffer a similar disadvantage compared with their white counterparts, the study finds.



Gay rights campaigners invade the pulpit during the Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter sermon at the Church of England's opposition to gay clergy. Peter Tatchell, organiser of the million group OutRage!, was later charged with riotous behaviour

## Parishes lose out to bishops

Amelia Gantioman

THE Church Commissioners have significantly cut the amount spent on parish clergy while increasing the salaries and grants paid to bishops, it emerged last week.

Overall spending on bishops, cathedral clergy salaries and housing, cathedral grants and administration has risen from £10.5 million to £18.5 million in 10 years. Over the same period, the amount paid towards clergy salaries and housing fell from £57.4 million to £19.5 million, dropping £8.4 million in the last year.

The commissioners' annual report showed that the Archbishop of Canterbury's salary had passed £50,000, while most clergy remain on stipends of £15,000.

Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Middlesbrough, said the Church had its "priorities upside down. To the rich shall be given, from the poor shall be taken. There's something seriously wrong

when the Church spends its money feather-bedding the bishops rather than on taking the Christian message out to the streets. There's a whiff of hypocrisy about this."

Churchgoers now meet 62 per cent of the clergy's £160 million pay bill, allowing the commissioners to concentrate on protecting the Church's assets.

The reduction in support for local parishes came as the Church fund saw an upturn in its fortunes. Last year assets rose to £3.48 billion from £2.98 billion in 1996, significantly outstripping for the first time the level at which they stood in the late 1980s. At that time, failed property investments — branded "foolish" by the House of Commons — led to an £800 million loss and financial crisis.

Assets last year outperformed the benchmark UK pensions fund average, as commissioners nipped for better long-term returns and a broader spread of risk. The Church's portfolio is no longer so heavily based in property.

Sir Michael Colman, Church Estates Commissioner, was appointed in 1993 to rescue commissioners from financial collapse, denied that excess amounts were being spent supporting senior figures. "I don't think for somebody in this position of the Archbishop of Canterbury that £50,000 is a great deal of money," he said. "I think it should recognise that the whole level of payment in the Church is extremely modest."

George Austin, Archbishop of York, is considering early retirement because of ill health and frustration at what he sees as the loss of traditional beliefs in the Church of England.

Booked into hospital next week for treatment for sleeplessness, Venerable Austin, aged 67, said he was "clinging on by his fingernails" to his defence of the High Church corner from within the priesthood. He accused liberals of renegeing compromise and "driving out traditional priests one by one."

## And the groom wore a green anorak

Michael Whita

THE Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and his fiancée, Gaynor Regan, last week made New Labour history when they sacrificed a sure-fire Fleet Street photo-opportunity in favour of Old Labour privacy by staging a dawn raid on Tunbridge Wells register office.

Instead of tying the knot, in what was a second marriage for both Mr Cook and his diary secretary, in their grand country house at Chevening, near Sevenoaks, Mr and Mrs Cook opted for the register office and what aides called "a private event free from media intrusion" — 10 days earlier than planned.

To make sure they would evade the Fleet Street paparazzi, they also arranged at the last minute not to be married at 5pm, but before normal matrimonial opening hours, at 8.30am. Building works and a

slip outside the door helped spoil any lurking photo-opportunity.

While the Foreign Secretary outflanked the media, he was unable to escape the prying eyes of the construction community. Bulldozer Robert Harman saw the party arrive. "It was just the two of them and two men. I think the men were witnesses, although one of them who was wearing a kid looked like a minder. Mr Cook was wearing a green anorak-type coat and she was wearing a dark suit."

His colleague, painter Allan Oakescott, said: "When they came out, [Mr Cook] punched the air." Air, incidentally, that remained confined-free.

"Robin and Gaynor are delighted to be a man and wife. I hope they will be left alone to enjoy the short break they deserve together," said Mr Cook's constituency agent, Jim Devine, understood to be "the man in the lid".

Conspiracy theorists could not decide whether the Cooks were attempting to upstage the Northern Ireland peace process or, on balance more likely, to marry while media attention was focused on Belfast.

It is like that one for the Foreign Secretary's wedding day.



## Speaker rebukes Labour spin doctors

Michael Whita

THE Speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd, last week won guarded support from MPs on all sides after warning Tony Blair's ministers not to bypass Parliament when announcing new government policies — and to rein in party "apparatchiks" and media spin doctors who encourage such tactics.

Senior Tories accused Mr Blair of attempting to adopt a presidential style, while some ministers admitted a problem, but attributed it to Labour's huge majority. "It's easy to neglect this place, but the pendulum will swing back when

MPs reassert themselves," said one. After months of private lobbying and occasional warnings from her chair in the Commons, Miss Boothroyd took a leaf out of the spin doctors' book by giving a rare interview on television to voice concern, days after the revelation that the Prime Minister has been in only 5 per cent of Commons divisions since May 1.

The Speaker, an MP for 25 years, conceded that private leaks and off-the-record briefings had taken place over the years. In the 1950s the "13-day rule" prevented any issue being discussed on television until it was due for debate in the Commons. But she clearly implied that

Labour is taking the skills it learned in 18 years of opposition to new lengths in order to control the media agenda. "All governments have done this. Perhaps other governments have done it more professionally or more successfully than of late... It's been rather blatant in the last six months," she said.

"I'm fighting a battle there and I know that in some areas I am winning that battle. There are a lot of senior ministers who are concerned about it and who agree with my attitude and who want to do the right thing, and I hope that I'm bringing it round," she told the BBC.

Asked about party spin doctors, the highly pro-active breed of press

spokesmen now in fashion, she said: "There are far too many of what I would term 'apparatchiks' who are working in government departments and who have been accustomed, when a party was in opposition, to want to get the maximum publicity. That's understandable. Now in government they have to be harnessed a little more."

That diplomatic formula translates as meaning that Labour too often still behaves as if it was still in opposition, thinking tactically about the next day's headlines and moulding policy presentation to the needs of direct communication with voters rather than the Commons. The Minister without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson,

has spoken of the replacement of classic "representative democracy" with a more interactive version.

"My views are very well known in Whitehall at the highest level... I have no complaints about the seriousness with which [ministers] accept what I have to say," Miss Boothroyd said.

She again made plain her distaste for some of the ingratiating habits of new Labour members, some of whom complain that the Commons rules are unfair, especially to women.

Warning of the need to win respect, she said: "I can't think of many toadies that have prospered actually, or many toadies whose names have become household names and who have gone down here terribly well. I think independence is important."

## Mowlam voted best minister

JO MOWLAM is the Government's most effective

minister, Northern Ireland its biggest success and tuition fees for university students its greatest mistake, according to a survey of Tory Blair's first year in power, writes Michael White.

The Prime Minister arouses mixed feelings among voters, with 30 per cent dissatisfied, against 42 per cent who think he is doing well, according to the survey by Good Housekeeping magazine.

His readers are more certain about Minister without Portfolio Peter Mandelson and his £750 million Millennium Dome project in Greenwich, southeast London. Nearly four to one they are keen on either, Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman's very satisfied to quite satisfied rating at 31 per cent, is also low. By two to one readers think women's issues have not received enough attention.

Mr Mowlam, working as Northern Ireland Secretary while recovering from a brain tumour, is streets ahead of her colleagues, with 79 per cent overall satisfaction rating.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, is on 68 per cent; Mr Straw, the Home Secretary, and John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, are on 64 per cent; and Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is on 44 per cent.

Meanwhile speculation about a cabinet reshuffle surfaced last week amid renewed suggestions that Mr Blair may announce changes shortly. It had been expected that he would hold off until June or July after Britain ended its European presidency.

Mr Mandelson is thought to have given up his quest for a "proper job" in Mr Blair's Cabinet. Many believe reorganisation would see him become an adviser of government strategy.

Mr Harman appears to have her right to keep her job, despite allies' insistence that she performed effectively during last year's last month's publication of the welfare green paper.

Others expected to be fired are David Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the transport minister Gavin Strang.

Ministerial Darling, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, is expected to take over as Social Security Secretary.

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## Blunkett faces down jeering teachers

John Carvel

**D**AVID BLUNKETT, the Education and Employment Secretary, faced down jeering leftwingers at the National Union of Teachers conference in Blackpool on Monday, warning that their behaviour put decent people off joining the profession.

After a resolute defence of the Government's education record during its first 11 months in office, he asked teachers to abandon their victim mentality and become partners in his campaign for higher standards.

Mr Blunkett escaped the ugly scenes that occurred when he addressed the same conference in Blackpool three years ago, but failed to get the standing ovation which greeted his speech last year in the run-up to the general election.

Doug McAvoy, the union's general secretary, said most delegates welcomed the Government's progress in cutting class sizes and expanding education investment, but he woo loud applause from moder-

ates and leftwingers when he castigated the unfairness of the policy of earning and shaming failing schools.

At a press conference later, Mr Blunkett said the Government would ignore the NUT's criticism of education actin zones and detailed guidelines on how to improve literacy in primary schools. These key parts of the education programme were non-negotiable.

The union had no reason to pursue plans for industrial action to reduce the bureaucratic burden of form-filling. It should respond to the bonfire of red tape he announced on Monday, but if teachers went ahead with the action they should not delude themselves that they could avoid damaging pupils.

"If it was effective, it would disrupt children's education and dislocate our standard agenda," he said.

Mr McAvoy said that the Education Secretary was wrong. Limited industrial action would start in some schools on April 27, but it would affect form-filling for government agencies and not performance in the classroom. The action could

escalate in September if Mr Blunkett's promise were not fulfilled, but even then it would not affect pupils' testing or exams.

Mr Blunkett said he did not hear all the jeers from his audience "because they are not all that articulate". Those responsible were a small minority of delegates and a minute proportion of the teaching profession.

After listing the programme of education measures since May, Mr Blunkett said: "We have not managed to wave a magic wand to transform things in the way many people would like, but we have managed to obtain £825 million in England to save the education service."

He was confident about teachers' desire to raise education standards. "Our job is to work with you in partnership... slogans won't do it."

A section of delegates on one side of the hall booed when he defended education action zones — clusters of about 20 schools in deprived areas to be run by local authority/business partnerships. The detailed guidelines on how to

teach reading and writing were not part of a new "era of imposition" on teachers.

"I ask teachers to stop believing they are victims and start seeing themselves as partners in change. It is easy to shout slogans, it is harder to make it happen on the ground... you can be part of the learning age, where inequality and injustice can be set aside."

The reduction to red tape announced by Mr Blunkett will include reduced demands on schools from the Office for Standards in Education, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Teacher Training Agency and local education authorities.

More than a third of 11- to 16-year-olds have been bullied at school in the past year, and almost one in 10 has missed school because of worries about violence, according to a survey of 4,000 pupils by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers published last week. Fifteen per cent said they had been attacked at school. More than a third were worried about violence.

### In Brief

**T**HE British pop star George Michael is facing charges of lewd conduct after being arrested in a men's lavatory in Beverly Hills. The singer, who admitted he was gay in a television interview, apologised to his fans for his recklessness.

**T**HE mother of Caroline Dickenson, the 13-year-old murdered in France in 1996, brought on unprecedented civil action against the local education authority that organised the holiday.

**E**UROSTAR will be fined £2,000 for each person carried from Brussels to London without proper travel documents.

**A**N UNPRECEDENTED number of women and ethnic minority lawyers have won the title of Queen's Counsel in Lord Irvine's first list of those thought to be the most able 10 per cent of the Bar.

**T**AXPAYERS face a bill totalling nearly £100 million to compensate quota-hopping Spanish boat owners barred from fishing in British waters, following a Court of Appeal ruling.

**C**HILDREN will be required to have separate passports from October in a move to combat an increase in abductions resulting from broken marriages.

**T**HE National Lottery operator Camelot was told it could continue to do business with the US computer company, G-Net, which sold out its shareholding after its founder and controller, Guy Snowden, was fined by bribery allegations against Virgin boss Richard Branson.

**T**HE NEW and much vaunted tallfin liveries on British Airways jets could be an airport safety hazard, the Civil Aviation Authority warned.

**N**ATIONAL Air Traffic Services was accused by MPs of "astonishing complacency" in delaying the opening of a £339 million centre at Swadlow, Hampshire to ease pressure on air traffic controllers.

**R**ECORDED crime fell by nearly 9 per cent in England and Wales last year — the largest drop in post-war history — but researchers warned it is likely to rise again because continuing economic prosperity and a rise in the number of males aged under 24 will reverse the sharp fall in burglaries and thefts.

**S**IR Ian MacGregor, the businessman who took on Arthur Scargill's striking miners as chairman of the National Coal Board, has died aged 85.

**D**OROTHY SQUIRES, a popular singer of the 1940s and 1950s, has died aged 85.

## Reform to end council sleaze

Lucy Ward

**T**HE Government last week unveiled new proposals to root out corruption among councillors and council staff.

In a step ministers hope will prove their commitment to stamping out malpractice, authorities will be required to adopt codes of conduct hindering councillors and employees.

Following criticism that the present system allows councils too much power to police themselves, the reforms will see the creation of an independent standards board to investigate corruption claims.

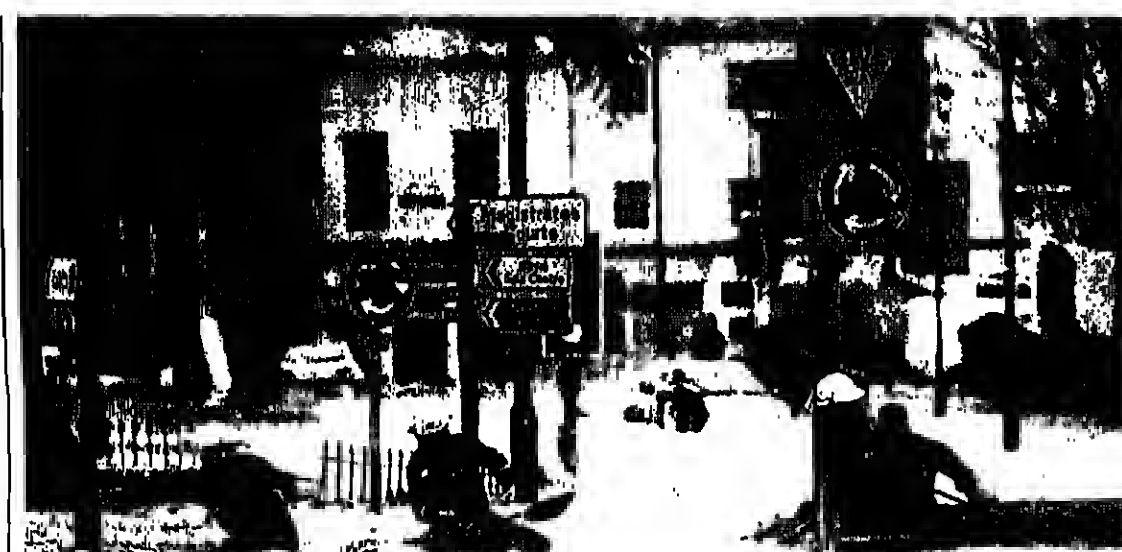
The proposals, published in a consultation paper, Modernising Local Government — A New Ethical Framework, form the final piece in the jigsaw of Labour's local government reforms.

Local government minister Hilary Armstrong said: "If people are to value local government, they must have a bond of trust with their councillors and their councils. They must be confident that they are helping their communities, not themselves."

Under the proposals, every council from metropolitan authorities down to parish councils will bring in its own code of conduct, based on a national model but tailored to suit its own structure. The code will cover issues including the requirement to declare interests, the relationship between councillors and officers, rules on expenses and allowances claims and the use of council facilities.

Where allegations are made, the Standards Board will inquire into them through regional panels, whose members would be chosen by regional chairmen from a local list. Councillors found guilty could face a public dressing down or a maximum five-year ban from holding council office.

The proposals follow wide consultation on recommendations put forward in July by Lord Nolan in a report on standards in local government. The responses stressed the need for an external system of handling corruption claims.



**Easter rising...** Fire fighters are forced to hoag on to lamp-posts and road signs as they bring in inflatable boats to rescue residents from the rising waters of Leominster Spa in Warwickshire. April showers became downpours and caused chaos across the nation. The West Midlands was the worst hit — a month's rain fell in 12 hours and the River Avon rose to its highest level for a century. PHOTO MAMP

## Anger at honour for Japanese emperor

Ewen MacAskill

**V**ETERANS of Japanese prisoner-of-war camps reacted angrily last week when Buckingham Palace confirmed that the Queen is to invest Emperor Akihito of Japan with the Order of the Garter, Britain's highest order of chivalry.

The Emperor will have the honour conferred on him during his visit to Britain next month. The Queen's decision was made after informal discussions with Tony Blair and the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, both of whom supported the move.

Mr Blair, who visited Japan in January, is keen to establish a new, modern relationship with Tokyo and hopes that the war veterans will not create embarrassment by demonstrating during the visit, which is scheduled for May 26-28.

PoW veterans insist they bear no grudge against Emperor Akihito or modern Japan, but see no reason to adopt a compliant attitude as long as Tokyo refuses to pay compensation for slave labour carried out by the PoWs. The veterans have been asking for £14,000 each.

Downing Street secured a partial compromise during Mr Blair's visit but not enough to satisfy the veterans. The Government has worked hard to pave the way for a trouble-free visit, with Mr Blair's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, encouraging the Japanese prime minister to apologise to the British people in the Sun newspaper in January, and the Foreign Office arranging interviews with the Emperor in potentially hostile papers in the run-up to the visit.

But Bill Holtham, who was the founder of a Japanese labour camp survivors group, said Emperor Akihito was the son of a war criminal and it was laughable that he should be receiving an award for chivalry.

Buckingham Palace said that the Order was in the Queen's gift, and that there were historical precedents. "There were a lot of links between the two countries," a spokesman said.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "The sacrifices and suffering will never be forgotten but they [the veterans] will recognise that there has been a long series of discussions with Japan [on the issue]. The

Emperor was a boy when the war took place."

The Emperor's father, Hirohito, was stripped of the Order soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, but had it restored when he visited Britain in 1971 — an occasion on which veterans stood on the streets in silence as his procession passed.

About 12 veterans protested outside the Japanese embassy last week and handed in a letter demanding Japan admits its guilt for "immoral and inhuman" treatment. The group also vowed to continue to push their views in the run-up to Emperor Akihito's visit.

One of the group, Richard Haskell, aged 74, from Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, spent more than three years in four different Japanese camps in Java, and was told he had just two weeks to live before he was liberated by Australian troops. At that time he weighed just 84lbs, and he says he still cannot eat properly because his stomach had shrunk so much.

He said: "The atom bomb saved me. If that had not ended the war when it did I would be dead now."

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## A blessed Good Friday

THESE men and women did noble work. Tired after 30 hours without sleep, their fatigue from 30 years of war proved greater. In the name of the people of Northern Ireland they reached out to their deadliest rivals — and made peace. It took the deaths of more than 3,000 people, the serious wounding of some 30,000 others, but on Good Friday the two sides of that long and bloody conflict joined together to declare, "Enough".

The Easter snow never let up, the air outside the Castle buildings stayed bitter and frigid — but still Sinn Féin's chairman described it as a "beautiful day". And so it was. Inside the Stormont building, men whose adult lives had been filled with talk of armed struggle and no surrender were now sharing a joke, paying warm tribute to each other. Usually hard-faced men came to speak, only to find a catch in their voice. One delegation was spotted in the middle of the night, its members quietly hugging each other.

The emotion was earned, as was the universal declaration that Stormont had witnessed history in the making. There

are important caveats. But no one should lose sight of the scale of the achievement. After three decades of conflict — and an antagonism that has endured for centuries — unionism and nationalism, loyalism and republicanism, Protestantism and Catholicism may finally have found a way to live together. This is an agreement backed by those who represent the men of violence, standing at opposite extremes. Gerry Adams was smiling, apparently with the blessing of the IRA army council — but so were Gary McMichael and David Ervine, the men who speak for the convicted killers of headline loyalism. It is as if the Middle East peace process had brought together Hamas and the Jewish settlers of the West Bank. It is an extraordinary feat of diplomacy.

The politicians counselled against euphoria, rightly warning that the task of reconciliation has only just begun. Prudence would suggest waiting a while before handing out plaques. Even so, it seems right to credit those who pulled off what so many said was impossible. In Northern Ireland, John Hume, Gerry Adams and David Trimble have all earned a place in history. Mr Hume has the courage to stand with Sinn Féin early, encouraging them to choose politics over warfare. Mr Adams led the republican movement away from violence and to-

wards a compromise on its core doctrine of a united Ireland. Sinn Féin has now formally accepted the partition of Ireland — an historic break. Mr Trimble proved the most obstinate negotiator in the last moments, but he showed political strength, too — persuading a party that has made intransigence into an article of faith to compromise. The Ulster Unionists' acceptance of the new ministerial council of the north and south grants the Republic a governmental stake in Northern Ireland for the first time. Until now unionists have regarded the South as an alien, if not enemy, power.

Outside the province, London and Dublin can congratulate themselves. Bertie Ahern buried his mother last week, then headed to Belfast for two sleepless days cajoling and arm-twisting the parties towards an agreement. Tony Blair was pivotal, luring Mr Trimble back to the peace table just when the entire effort seemed doomed. All that was possible thanks to the dogged, indefatigable work of his secretary of state, Mo Mowlam. Her human touch attracted much criticism these last months, but now she is vindicated: she succeeded where every predecessor had failed. Thanks in part to her, Mr Blair has won the prize that had eluded every British PM since Gladstone. It is the crowning achievement of his first year in office.

All the participants were lucky, too, in the choice for chairman, George Mitchell, years of deal-making in the US Senate stood him in good stead, as did the presence of his two largely unused co-chairmen from Canada and Finland. It helped that the trio was backed by an American president who believed in the Northern Ireland peace process before almost any one else. John Major and Albert Fujimori authored the first framework document that made last week possible.

The deal may be done, but peace is never a done deal. The signatures are just the start. There will be opposition, but the peacemakers must stand firm. There will be challenges from within, too — starting with conflicting interpretations of what the details of the 67-page document mean. Several of the parties must now have the plan approved by their executives and members. Some unionists might balk at the early release of prisoners; some republicans may recoil at the return of decommissioning. Both sides are bound to find it hard to sit together with old enemies.

Failure is a possibility. But so, now, is success. The people of Northern Ireland at last have an opportunity to live their lives in peace. It is a time for gratitude, and even the odd private prayer. For this was a blessed Good Friday.

## Sinn Féin at the crossroads

Malachi O'Doherty explores the dilemma facing republicans

IT IS little wonder that Gerry Adams held back from affirming the deal secured at Stormont Castle on Good Friday. The real marvel was that he did not reject it completely. Republicans were never going to look on the deal, whatever its shape, as a final settlement. It would be, at best, a staging post towards full Irish unification. The question was whether they would try to wreck the deal or work through it.

They have some hard decisions to make. Sinn Féin cannot take the sort of semi-detached attitude it took to earlier agreements. It has to decide whether to oppose it in a referendum or to support it. To support it, it will have to reverse its positions on the consent principle and the Irish constitution. It seems virtually inconceivable that it can do either. Political disgrace awaits Adams if his party makes the wrong decision.

Sinn Féin's vote rose by 15 per cent when it entered the peace process. There were no ceasefire during the elections, yet more nationalists than ever before flocked to the party. Those votes were urging Sinn Féin to make peace. Now the process is over, it must either meet those expectations or lose those votes to the SDLP.

Adams may calculate that many nationalists will be sceptical of the assembly, and campaign against it, but the assembly is now locked into the cross-border bodies. Crashing the assembly, either by abstention or by disorder on the streets, would also crash the cross-border Council of Ministers. It is easy to see how this could be done, but few nationalists would thank republicans for doing it.

Electoral dangers compel Sinn Féin, in the short term, to compete peacefully against the SDLP or further jeopardise its vote. Yet the IRA has never before held a ceasefire through an election period. To increase its vote while the "armed struggle" is on is always a bonus.

A truly cynical but perfectly plausible reading of the IRA's decision to end its ceasefire in 1996 with the Canary Wharf bomb would go like this: Sinn Féin was being coaxed into an electoral pact with the SDLP; on a proportional sharing of the seats in national areas it could only at most have got two MPs, and probably only one; the bomb made the pact impossible, and Sinn Féin went on to get two seats. This time there seems little opportunity to use violence so creatively.

Some republicans are wondering how they got into this mess. It was not the underlying principles of the peace process that raised their hopes and kept them involved. They

were always aware of the limitations of the process. But they hoped rested on the support of the SDLP, the Irish government and President Bill Clinton, and the faith that they would push the process beyond its obvious limitations.

Such a last-minute squeeze on the unionists seemed to be working to republican advantage in the last days of the talks, but the final agreement falls short of republican hopes.

The republicans' allies have bought the new agreement and expect republicans to buy it too. If they reject it, and produce more violence to show evidence, the way they do, that the causes of violence are still in place, they will not find the same understanding of their murderous reflexes as they have been shown until now.

Only two weeks ago republicans seemed to believe that they were well on their way to success. They believed that there was a new nationalism in place which could barter for far greater change than was to be attained.

Their optimism was out of kilter with the mood of their people. Former Sinn Féin councillor Martin O'Muilleoir expressed dependency in his column in the *Andersonstown News*: "The bottom line for new nationalists is that the Council of the Poles (sic) is out; the sell-out on Articles Two and Three is out; and the new Stormont Assembly is out. The sooner [Irish Prime Minister] Bertie Ahern understands those bald facts, the sooner we can get down to discussing a sensible arrangement."

Minimal expectations of the new constitutionalism were that Articles Two and Three would remain intact and that Northerners would have the right to elect members to the Irish Parliament, the Dail. The agreement would have to be understood to have the potential to evolve towards Irish unity, and the SDLP would have to stay with the "new nationalism".

Only a few days after these depressive assessments, Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness offered his own evaluation of the tactics of the Irish prime minister. He said Ahern was "playing a blinder".

The gap between the positions of O'Muilleoir and McGuinness is both narrow and vast. McGuinness clearly thought that there was a small step forward within reach that would lay the old struggle to rest and offer a political way forward.

Adams' ways had what some loyalists have described as "the luxury of dissent", because sufficient consensus was available without him. But he knows now that the peace process is over. The Hume-Adams project has completed itself and republicans are on their own.

## Unionists must swallow hard

Henry Patterson on the gamble taken by David Trimble

SIR Oliver Napier of the Alliance party served as a minister in the power-sharing government that was agreed at Sunningdale and destroyed by the loyalist Ulster Workers' Council strike in 1974. As the deadline for a peace deal approached, he was asked to describe the difference between then and now. His answer was that those who had been, on the outside in 1974, bitterly attacking the new administration, were now sitting down with him trying to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion.

However, while it is true that those who used violence to destroy the trail peace in 1974 are now proponents of a historic compromise between unionism and nationalism, a significant sector of the loyalist community will be hostile to the agreement. The statement by a former Irish government adviser that an agreement which did not include Sinn Féin was "not worth a penny candle" has become a mantra for many Irish nationalists. Yet David Trimble's task of selling his party an agreement that Gerry Adams could live with will be a formidable one.

The deep-rooted communalism of Ulster encourages a view of politics as a zero-sum struggle in which a gain for the "other side" is inevitably conceived as a loss for one's own. Since its formation, unionism has been driven by tension between the need to accommodate the interests of the British state in Ireland and a parochial assertion of the Ulster majority's right to run the province as it thinks best.

But the decline in the strength of unionism since the sixties has encouraged a rethinking of unionist strategy. The key development is on the North-South dimension of any settlement. Until recently, unionists proposed a "good neighbours" model of relations with the South, in which a new government in the North would work out "practical" forms of co-operation with Dublin.

Anything more was rejected as a form of creeping all-Ireland integration. A compromise has been made possible by a unionist shift towards acceptance of a North-South council that, although established by legislation in the Dail and Westminster, will be accountable to the assembly.

It was the Council of Ireland provisions of the Sunningdale Agreement that proved fatal, so what is there to prevent history repeating itself? First, there can be no denying the low-key nature of the areas in which the council will operate: animal health and environmental protection, for example, are not the sort of thing to send loyalists to the barricades.

Second, there is Dublin's decision to amend the Irish constitution to remove the territorial claim on the North. This decisive break has provided unionism with an agreement which will signify the acceptance by nationalists of the legitimacy of Northern Ireland.

For Trimble, some institutional expression of the national identity of Northern Ireland's Catholic minority in the form of North-South institutions is a price worth paying for a settlement that leaves Northern Ireland firmly within the Union and for the first time with the acceptance and participation of nationalists.

It is this aspect of the agreement that has caused so much discomfort for Sinn Féin. Under Adams' leadership, the party has moved far beyond what the more fundamentalist elements of the republican movement can live with. Adams, who had given up the idea that armed struggle could win Irish unity, still relied on unionist obduracy to bring the talks to a standstill, thus further alienating the Northern majority from the rest of the United Kingdom and forcing a radical shift in government policy towards joint authority.

The document produced by George Mitchell appeared briefly to be contributing to such a scenario. However, the swift and decisive rejection of it by Trimble, and the consequent intense involvement of Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, yielded a final agreement that threatens to severely disrupt the republican movement.

Although there is no real basis in the agreement for it to be depicted as "transitional", a united Ireland, Sinn Féin will use all its formidable tactical skills to present it as such — and realises that other parts of the agreement could create real problems for Trimble in his struggle to sell it to his party. Adams will need to risk a major internal debate to get authority to allow Sinn Féin members elected to the new assembly to take their seats. But he knows that the possibility of having to sit in a Cabinet with republicans would cause revolution in the unionist grassroots.

Together with the proposals for reform of the RUC and for prisoner releases, this will be an unpalatable package for ordinary members of the Ulster Unionist party, who will be exploited in the rejectionist campaign promised by Ian Paisley and Bob McCartney. Nevertheless, Trimble's trump card will be damaged by that the party most likely to be damaged by the agreement is Sinn Féin, which faces political isolation if it rejects it and major internal convulsions if it does not.

In the zero-sum world of Ulster politics, this may be enough to save Trimble from the fate of Brian Faulkner, the Unionist leader destroyed by Sunningdale.

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## Chirac and Jospin push for reform

Olivier Biffaud

WHAT has been called the "modernisation" — it is more a case of reform — of the French political system under the stewardship of the power-sharing president, Jacques Chirac, and the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, got off to a flying start on April 8: the cabinet approved two bills, drawn up by Interior Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, that will drastically restrict political "multi-jobbing".

In concrete terms this will mean that no elected representative will be allowed to hold more than two posts at the same time. Someone who is a member of parliament may not at the same time be president of a region or *département*, or mayor of a city, town or village, though he or she may be a councillor at local or regional level.

The government's three-point plan aims to bring about "a more demanding commitment to public service", at the same time as "an increased participation by women in political office" and "a clarification of respective responsibilities within each institution".

The restriction of multi-jobbing was the first plank of Chirac's blueprint for modernising the political system after last month's regional elections had demonstrated the degree of leverage the far-right National Front (FN) could exert on the mainstream right. It is also something that was consistently advocated by Jospin during the presidential campaign of 1995 and by the Socialist party (PS) in 1996.

As soon as he became prime minister last year, Jospin reiterated his views on the issue in his general policy statement of June 19. He stressed that a restriction of multi-jobbing was something that had not only become "a priority" for political leaders, but was in tune with public opinion.

During the president's traditional July 14 television interview, Chirac

made it clear that he shared Jospin's view and that his stance on the multi-jobbing issue was firm. He said he favoured "limitation, and even restriction to a single office, on condition the matter was thoroughly debated in parliament".

By November 20, when he addressed the conference of the Association of French Mayors, Chirac had shifted his ground slightly. He hoped that "those women and men who have the weighty responsibility of drawing up the law are not cut off from the realities of life on the ground".

Meanwhile Jospin had begun a series of consultations with representatives of all the political parties except the FN, with the aim of finding out what they thought of multi-jobbing. It is such a complex issue that differences of opinion do not exactly follow the dividing line between right and left. There are people for and against multi-jobbing in every political party.

Jospin was initially tempted to get parliament to approve at least a first reading of the planned new legislation before last month's regional and cantonal elections. But in the end he decided not to rush things. A minority of deputies belonging to the Socialist group tried to put pressure on Jospin, but to no avail. The prime minister decided to heed the arguments of one of his advisers, Gérard Le Gall, who had urged him to take his time.

On February 11 Jospin sent his proposals to the party leaders he had consulted. Presented as "balanced solutions" designed to make the democratic system "more efficient and closer to the people", they have been included in the two bills that Jospin hopes will receive a first reading by June 30, when parliament goes into summer recess.

A third bill — of a constitutional nature, since it involves barring government ministers from holding executive office in local assemblies — has yet to be drawn up. It will

## Le Monde



Chirac on a visit to Bosnia last week. At home the president has made common cause with the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, on the issue of political "multi-jobbing".

PHOTOGRAPH: ALMIRA/ARNAULT

require a change in the fundamental law, as indeed will the introduction of "equal access" for men and women to political, professional and social positions of responsibility; and it appears to constitute the only bone of contention between the president and the prime minister.

Under the terms of the first bill approved by the cabinet it will no longer be possible for anyone elected to the office of deputy or senator also to be a member of the European Parliament (MEP). A deputy or a senator will not be allowed to hold an executive position at local government level or occupy more than one post as a (non-executive) councillor on top of his or her job in parliament or the senate.

The second bill states that no one may hold more than two non-

executive posts at local level (as a regional, general, municipal, Corsican or Paris councillor), and no one may hold more than one executive post at that level. People who are already MEPs may not hold any of these posts either, nor may they hold more than one non-executive post.

The presidency of intercommunal structures and the posts of deputy president or deputy mayor in local assemblies are not covered by the provisions of the bill.

The prime minister's office has indicated that it is now up to members of parliament to propose the number of amendments they see fit. Whatever happens, the Socialists have no intention of spearheading the reform, which is something they could easily have done.

(April 9)

## No answers to burning questions

EDITORIAL

"THE fire's been waiting to break out for 30 years," quipped a member of the National Amazonia Research Institute. He was referring sarcastically to the fires that have ravaged the forests of Roraima state, in northwestern Brazil, on a scale never seen before in the region.

The fires have not been due to El Niño or any other unavoidable quirk of nature — they are a colossal ecological disaster whose cause is primarily political. Far from being inevitable, it was the result of a resettlement policy that was first implemented at the beginning of the seventies by Brazil's military dictatorship.

The fire spread as a result of the slash-and-burn technique used by settlers on recently cleared land, with little or no regard for the most elementary precautions.

Claiming to offer "land without people to people without land" — a slap in the face for the indigenous tribes that had been living there for centuries — the succession of generals who occupied the post of president in Brasília thought they could bypass a genuine process of agrarian reform by taking the destitute inhabitants of the feudal, semi-arid Nordeste and resettling them in the Amazon region.

The policy of populating Brazil's northern territories also served one of the regime's major geopolitical priorities, the National Integration Plan, whose aim was to thwart foreign powers' alleged designs on the region.

The result of the massive transfer of ill-prepared migrants was that their poverty was transported with them to the newly settled areas. Forced to keep on destroying more and more forest, because a cleared area can, at best, produce crops for a period of only two years, the farmers were the principal victims of a perverse policy.

And that policy has not been modified in the slightest since the re-establishment of democracy in Brazil. Amazonia continues to act as a "safety valve" for social tensions generated by an iniquitous distribution of land in the rest of the country.

In the past three years 47,220 sq km of forest has been wiped off the map. Asian timber companies, despite their illegal operations — including the extraction of tropical hardwood from "protected" Indian reserves — and despite being universally denounced by non-governmental organisations, are continuing to descend into Amazonia on a massive scale. And they are doing so with the blessing of the government.

Unless something is done, the plundering and burning will continue — a situation that is nothing short of an ecological crime. (April 6-8)

## Gloom dampens Ecuador election campaign

Nicola Bonnet in Lima

THE twin campaigns for Ecuador's presidential and general elections, scheduled to take place in less than two months, have just begun against a backdrop of economic gloom. The kickoff came on March 30, with the official registration of the eight contenders for the presidency. The first round of the presidential election will take place on May 31.

Ecuador's 7 million voters are smarting not only from a succession of natural disasters triggered by El Niño, but from the serious economic and social repercussions of the plummeting price of oil, the main source of foreign currency.

Voters, who have been asked to go to the polls four times in the past two years, make no secret of the fact that they are fed up with the unpredictability that has recently characterised Ecuadorian politics.

In 1996 they elected as president the populist Abdalá Bucaram,

whose nickname was El Loco. Six months later, following mass demonstrations against his economic policies, the Ecuadorian Congress, plainly exceeding its powers, eased him out of office on the grounds that he was suffering from a "mental disability".

As a result Ecuador found itself with three heads of state for a period of 72 hours. While Bucaram fled to his home town of Guayaquil on the coast, before eventually going into exile, vice-president Rosalva Arteaga claimed she was entitled to step into his shoes, and then stepped aside in favour of the president of the Congress, Fabian Alarcón, who had the support of the military.

A referendum held three months later confirmed Alarcón's position as a caretaker president, for want of a more satisfactory solution. Then came the election of a Constituent Assembly.

Today populist leaders of every political hue are seeking the favours

of the electorate. According to the latest opinion poll, carried out at the end of March by the Market Institute, the man currently in the lead, with 32 per cent of the electorate intending to vote for him, is Jamil Mahuad of the People's Democracy party. He is currently mayor of the capital, Quito.

Mahuad has the support of the conservative Social-Christian party of Leon Febres Cordero (president from 1984-88), which is not putting forward its own candidate.

Bucaram, who until last month said he would be joining the presidential race, has now decided to stay in exile in Panama. Following accusations that he misappropriated funds, he risks imprisonment if he returns to Ecuador.

It seems unlikely that any of the candidates will win an outright majority in the first round of the election, in which case the new president will be elected in the second round on July 12.

The international financial community is keeping a close and anxious eye on political developments in Ecuador because the economic situation there seems to be on the brink of chaos. Alarcón has not taken any steps to curb inflation, which now stands at more than 25 per cent, or to close a yawning budget deficit. And no structural reforms aimed at modernising the country have been implemented.

The cost of damage caused by El Niño (estimated at \$1.2 billion), compounded by the collapse of oil prices, has sent the budget deficit soaring from \$500 million to \$1.3 billion. "Unless we take steps to rein in that deficit, inflation will rise to 100 per cent," says Danilo Carreras, who is in charge of Ecuador's monetary policy.

To reduce the deficit the government put before parliament a proposal to increase value added tax by 40 per cent, but this was rejected. In turn the monetary authorities asked Alarcón to devalue the Ecuadorian currency, the sucre, by 7.5 per cent. When the president refused, they resigned.

(April 5-6)







## 'Jerusalem Will Never Be Redivided'

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks to Lally Weymouth about his hopes for peace

I've heard that you and U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross have discussed a new proposal: Allowing the Palestinians to build in certain Israeli-held areas near the Jordan Valley.

We're discussing a number of possibilities to bridge the gaps, but we haven't made any final determination. I think Ross saw a serious effort on the part of the Israeli government. There are two principles we believe are essential for peace. One is that the Palestinians fulfill the promises they gave us to fight terrorism and annul their covenant, and the second is that the U.S. recognize the need for Israel to determine its security needs and hence the area from which it will withdraw.

What is your vision of peace with the Palestinians?

My vision is that at the end of the final settlement, the Palestinians will be able to have their own territory and the ability to govern themselves inside that territory but (with) none of the powers that could threaten Israel.

In other words, they won't be able to have a defense capability? They would be able to have local law and order capabilities, but they shouldn't be able to field a large army or to import weapons that could effectively neutralize Israel's defense.

So, there will be no Palestinian state?

My opposition to the word "statehood" is because it tends to encompass those unlimited powers that could threaten Israel. I have no problem with the Palestinians

running their own lives. Therefore, I envision a final settlement which is a balance of the Palestinians' need to run their own affairs and our need to protect Israel's security. I believe that this government can strike a balance and deliver an agreement which the overwhelming majority of Israelis can stand by.

Your right-wing supporters oppose a deal that would hand over land to the Palestinians.

I made it very clear that if [Palestinian leader Yasser] Arafat and the Palestinian Authority keep their side of the bargain, we'll keep our side.

Your relationship with the Clinton administration does not appear to be successful. Why? It's had its difficult moments. Over the years we've had divided views between American presidents and Israeli prime ministers on Israel's security needs. We had Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion differing on the Sinai; Ford differing with Rabin during the reassessment in 1975; Reagan and Begin clashing over Lebanon.

Do you and President Clinton have a fundamental difference? In comparison to those disagreements, this is... a milder case.

Is it true that the Palestinians only arrest terrorists when Israel presents them with intelligence?

They only act on a specific tip that we give them. For example, if we say that terrorist X, living on street Y in city Z, is about to launch a terrorist act against Israel, they'll pick him up. But they don't do systematic sweeps [and] interrogations. They're not making the difficult choice, which Egypt and Jordan have made. The choice is whom do you want to make peace with — Israel or the terrorists? It's one or the other, but not both.

Do you have a vision of living to



Netanyahu... "Fifty years ago we were at the abyss of death... I think this is more than the founding fathers could have wished for"

peace one day with the Palestinians?

Yes, I do... not one day, [but] soon. If Arafat accepts my offer to negotiate a permanent settlement, we could have a historic breakthrough with the one government that can deliver. I hope it happens during this term.

What happens if Arafat unilaterally declares a Palestinian state on May 4, 1999, the original deadline for a permanent status agreement?

I wouldn't recommend unilateral action. Palestinian unilateral actions always run the risk of unilateral Israeli actions... Israel cannot be thrown back to the indefensible '67 boundaries and Jerusalem will never be redivided.

Do you have any hope of a treaty with Syria?

Yes, I do. If Syria is less rigid about the conditions for restarting

## Japan P.M. Unveils Plan For Economy

Sandra Sugawara in Tokyo

**B**OWING to pressure from foreign leaders, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto unveiled last week a plan to cut income taxes by \$30 billion over the next two years, a step economists hope will stop Japan's slide into recession.

Hashimoto said Japan's economy was in "quite a serious state" and needed new stimulus. His move reverses a long policy that Japan could not have new tax cuts, so as to keep its budget deficit under control.

Stopping a recession in Japan is emerging as a central goal in international efforts against the financial crisis that is shaking much of East Asia. If Japan can get its economy moving by giving citizens more spending money, billions of dollars of imports would be drawn in from all over the region, helping other Asian countries recover.

U.S. ambassador to Japan Thomas Foley called the stimulus package "very encouraging" and "a bold action." The U.S. has led a rising chorus of the International Committee demanding for tax cuts to revive economic growth in Japan, the world's second-largest economy.

In Washington, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin gave a more guarded response. He "welcomed" the step, adding that "what is crucial is that Japan move quickly to put in place a strong program."

Hashimoto's handling of the economy has sent his popularity rating plummeting, but analysts said his performance last week may turn that around. "Mr. Hashimoto made his breakthrough in his political crisis," said political commentator Shigeo Hayashida.

Hashimoto gave out few additional details about the tax and spending plan, and there were immediately conflicting interpretations. The Finance Ministry and Hashimoto's office said it was not yet clear how much of a tax cut each taxpayer would receive or when they would get the money.

But the NHK television network reported that the rebate would be similar to a \$15 billion tax cut enacted last January, which will give almost \$500 to a family of four this year.

In recent weeks, Japan has been hit by a long list of grim economic data. Economists have been warning that Japan was falling into recession, and criticized Hashimoto for being slow to act. But in order to do the additional \$30 billion in tax cuts, parliament must amend Japan's fiscal restraint law, the centerpiece of Hashimoto's economic policy to reduce the nation's deficit. Some critics have asserted that if Hashimoto switched positions on fiscal policy, he should resign.

The tax cuts are not permanent, lasting only two years. They leave unclear whether consumers would go out and spend the money, or save it in anticipation of tax rates rising.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
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## Austria Confronts Its Shameful Past

William Drozdzak in Vienna

**S**IXTY years after the Nazis marched into Austria and were treated as conquering heroes by wildly cheering crowds, a dramatic transformation is taking place in the way this nation of 8 million people looks at one of the most sordid chapters in its long history.

History books have been rewritten so that students can learn that Austria was not just the first victim of Nazi aggression — as it long pretended — but rather behaved in many respects as an ardent sympathizer and active collaborator in the diabolical aims of its native son, Adolf Hitler.

In contrast to former president Kurt Waldheim, who for many years covered up his involvement in wartime atrocities, Austria's leaders now speak with striking candor about the fact that many compatriots were linked to Nazi crimes and that the rampant antisemitism that culminated in the Holocaust found fertile soil here.

Germany's neighbors are still struggling to cope with their legacy of collaboration with the Nazi regime. The ascendancy of a generation born after the war and the release of documents kept secret during the Cold War have done much to erode myths of resistance and states of denial that persisted throughout much of Europe.

The trial in France of Maurice Papon, which concluded this month with the wartime official's conviction of complicity in crimes against humanity, cast new light on the extent to which many French officials cooperated with the Nazi occupation. Switzerland has been forced to acknowledge that it was spared not because of a plucky army guarding its borders but because it provided useful financial services to the Nazis.

During ceremonies last month marking the 60th anniversary of the Anschluss, or annexation to Nazi Germany, Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima emphasized that the time was long overdue "for an open and critical debate so that Austria can draw the right lessons about its past."

He said it was "a long and painful process" to confess Austria's shared responsibility for Nazi crimes. But he insisted Austrians could no longer justify old myths about being overwhelmed by a foreign power. He noted that 700,000 Austrians were Nazi party members, and that many held leading positions in the hierarchy and were guilty of complicity in crimes against humanity.

President Thomas Klestil, Waldheim's successor, also stressed the need to deal squarely with the Nazi past and to do whatever is possible to make amends to the victims, especially members of Austria's once-thriving Jewish community who were exterminated or deported.

Klestil lamented that "those who were expelled then were invited much too late, and unconvincingly, to return home." He said that while serving as ambassador to the United States in the 1980s he felt a particular shame in meeting Austrian Jews who lost their homes and belongings during the Nazi occupation.

"I know how deeply they loved their old home country despite all that happened," Klestil said. "They would have had a right to expect Austria's rebirth, and I know that their contributions to our democracy and culture could have been invaluable."

Austria's changing assessment of its historical culpability has gone beyond words.

After two paintings by Egon Schiele loaned by Austria for a recent show in New York were seized

because it was suspected they had belonged to Holocaust victims, Education and Culture Minister Elisabeth Gehrer declared that "immoral decisions" dating to the war must be rectified.

She ordered that once provenance is certified, all national art works confiscated by the Nazis would be returned to their rightful owners — a decision that experts believe will strip more than 100 masterpieces from Vienna's leading museums.

Austria announced recently it would resume cooperation with U.S. agents in the hunt for Nazi criminals, reviving an accord suspended in 1990 when Waldheim was barred from the United States after the Justice Department concluded that as a lieutenant in the German army in the Balkans, Waldheim helped the Nazi SS deport prisoners to slave labor or death camps.

This accord symbolically ends the Waldheim affair complex and marks the emergence of a new Austria, which we hail," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress in New York.

School textbooks, which for decades nourished the myth that Austrians were the Nazis' first victims and suppressed the notion of any national guilt, have been rewritten to emphasize the direct complicity of many Austrians in the Nazi party and Nazi crimes. Vienna's mayor has decreed that the Steven Spielberg film Schindler's List will be required viewing for all schoolchildren in the city.

Klima acknowledged in an interview that the avalanche of foreign criticism during Waldheim's presidency from 1986 to 1992 was an agonizing and humiliating ordeal — one that made Austrians at times feel they belonged to a parish state.

Once Waldheim left office, Klima's predecessor, Franz Vran-

itzky, moved quickly to refurbish the nation's image and revise Austria's view of history so that it reflected painful truths about widespread Nazi sympathies. As the first Austrian leader born after the war, Klima, 50, says he feels a special moral duty to sustain that legacy.

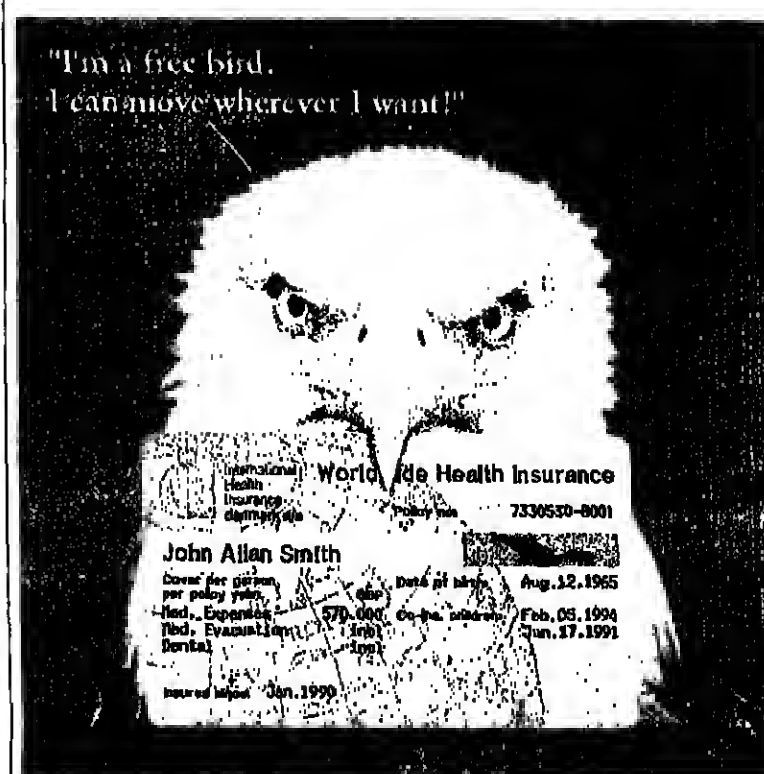
Klima says the need to confront the truth about the fascist era is not just a matter of coming to terms with history. He believes it also holds special political relevance for today's Austria.

The Freedom Party led by Jörg Haider has emerged as the biggest

far-right movement in Europe and captured 28 percent of the vote in elections to the European Parliament last year. Haider has already staked his claim to replace Klima as Austria's next head of government after national elections are held next year.

Haider rejects any comparison to Nazi or fascist forebears. None the less, he has lived up to his fighting reputation by publicly praising the employment policies of the Nazi regime and waging a xenophobic campaign to expel foreign workers.

"We must always be vigilant in fighting against racism, fanaticism or indifference," Klima said. "Given the nature of our past, we must never forget how people can be misled by populist demagogues."



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## 'Beach Boys' Blinded by the Sun

COMMENT  
Richard Estrada

**I**F YOU'RE craving fun in the sun, I go to the English-speaking Caribbean. But if consorting with modern-day pirates living off indentured servants is your idea of a good time, go instead to the English-speaking Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana.

Last year I wrote more than once about the nightmare facing some 40,000 mainly Chinese, Bangladesh and Filipino citizens working in the U.S. commonwealth located 4,000 miles west of Hawaii. Since then, the evasion there of U.S. labor, immigration and human rights standards in garment sweatshops has worsened.

Unfortunately, the news did not keep House Republican leaders from sheiving a reform bill introduced by Democrat George Miller of California that would have required an increase in the island's minimum wage and improved living conditions for foreign workers. Yet, still, newer information

suggests that the appalling myopia of libertarian-Republican ideologues must continue to be challenged. Companies based on the U.S. mainland are having to compete with the indentured labor of mainly Chinese-owned factories based in the Northern Mariana. To capitalize on U.S. consumer affinity for domestic products, they sew "Made in Mariana/USA" labels into their garments.

In the bargain, the offshore sweatshops are able to avoid the kind of tariff and quota restrictions that face U.S. manufacturers who export abroad, as well as avoiding normal U.S. immigration and wage laws. And now here come investigators hired by the Department of the Interior to report that nearly a third of the foreign manufacturers doing business in the islands may be transshipping products assembled in China.

Advocates for reform such as former garment manufacturer Joe Allen of Dallas and ex-Salpan resident Peggy Japko of neighboring McKinley are incredulous at the human toll. Garment guest workers

are banned by their employers from engaging in political or religious activities, or from even socializing or marrying during the period of their labor contracts.

In a recent case, a woman who accused a CNMI immigration official of raping her has been given a deportation order by CNMI officials after she undertook a civil lawsuit. The assailant has been convicted and sent to prison.

Whatever happens in the long run, the Northern Mariana's garment industry is enjoying a boom now. The Department of Commerce announced in January that the volume of garments manufactured in the CNMI increased by 45 percent over the previous year and that annual exports are expected to hit the \$1 billion-a-year mark in 1998.

When U.S. garment manufacturers lose market share to foreign competitors under trade agreements, that's life. But when Congress knowingly winks at the loss of domestic market share to an abominable labor, immigration and trade regime in a corrupt backwater political entity over which Congress

has authority, the word betrayal comes to mind.

Demanding that the CNMI immediately enter into negotiations with the U.S. government to phase in higher labor and immigration standards is the best alternative. The next best option is to break ties with the Northern Mariana altogether. But if neither of the above options is possible, the imposition of quotas on the garment production of the Mariana is a last resort.

Not that a group of Republican congressmen and staffers collectively known as "the Beach Boys" is likely to agree. The nearly 100 Capitol Hill insiders — led by House Majority Whip Tom DeLay and members of Majority Leader Dick Armey's staff — visited the Northern Mariana at CNMI government expense in 1997, at a per person cost ranging from \$4,000 to \$5,000.

It was hard work, to be sure. But as the Beach Boys explained, someone had to go out there and find out the truth about allegations from "the left" that labor practices on the islands are inhumane. But, as has been argued by every outfielder who has ever dropped a routine fly ball early in the season, the sun must have gotten to their eyes.

## Living in Arms' Way

Evacuations come with the territory, discovers Sue Anne Pressley in Engle, New Mexico

**O**N THE morning after their wedding out on the family ranch back in 1983, when any newlywed couple might be expected to dawdle, Russell and Hazel Cain wrenched themselves from sleep early. Along with their wedding guests, they were forced to drive into this thinly populated desert community, park in the church lot and wait — until the regularly scheduled missile test over their house and land was completed.

"We had lots of company, lots of out-of-town people," said Hazel Cain, 48. "They got a true New Mexico experience."

For the Cains and about 80 other families who live around Engle on this expanse of desert in southern New Mexico, having to leave home once or twice a month while a missile goes off at the nearby White Sands Missile Range is part of life. No one here seems to dwell much on the obvious reason for the evacuation: the slim chance that an errant missile could touch down on one's home.

In this vast state, where America's deepest military secrets are developed and put to the test, residents take the occasional disruption for granted.

But people who live here are sometimes conflicted about the presence and influence of the federal government. On one hand, they resent the intrusion into environmental matters and grazing rights. On the other, they recognize how utterly dependent the state's economy is on the machinations of Washington politics and the largesse of the federal coffers.

"We have no logging, we have no oil and gas drilling, and the cattle industry is dying — that makes us entirely dependent on defense," said Jim Catron, the county attorney for Catron, Sierra and Socorro counties. "What are we going to do when [Senate Budget Chairman] Pete Domenici, R-New Mexico, dies or gets tired of the Beltway and comes home? May he live as long as Strom Thurmond, or this whole state will be a ghost town."

In this part of the country, missile test reports on the morning radio are as common as surfing reports in Los Angeles. As often as two or three times a week, a strip of U.S. Route 70 between Las Cruces and Alamogordo, ranging from 7 miles to 40 miles long, is shut down for certain periods to allow missiles to zoom across the highway. Woe be to the unsuspecting tourist who thinks he is going to glide through, do a sizzling day that also happens to be a testing day.

White Sands — the largest military installation in the country,

covering 3,200 square miles — is, not surprisingly, also the largest employer in southern New Mexico, where towns and job opportunities are scarce. About 6,700 people worked at the base in fiscal year 1997; during the Gulf conflict in the 1990s, the number soared to 9,000.

The complex has been the site of tests involving weapons from Nike, Viking and Lance missiles to multiple launch rocket systems to the Big One. Between 1945 and fiscal 1996, 41,593 missiles were fired here, according to the base's public-affairs office. In 1996 alone, not a particularly active year, 368 missiles were fired, and 32 other tests were performed involving bomb drops, explosives, guns and balloons.

Since 1960, the facility has operated what base officials refer to as "call-up areas," along the range's western boundary, and along a 40-by-40-mile square to the north. Under contracts with area ranchers, White Sands is allowed to evacuate residents for a 12-hour period, often beginning at a gruesome 5 a.m., thus doubling the available area for testing in long-range missiles.

But the general attitude among residents is that it is only a little trouble, not a bad thing — even when they do make the occasional odd discovery on their land. Recently, for instance, Russell Cain happened upon a shaft of twisted green metal, about 8 feet long and 4 feet wide, pitted with holes, surprisingly lightweight, and flung down in one of the most remote parts of his immense ranch: more White Sands litter.



## Sound Bites and Strategy

James Ledbetter

SPIN CYCLE  
Inside the Clinton Propaganda  
Machine  
By Howard Kurtz  
Free Press. 324 pp. \$25

AT THE heart of Spin Cycle, Howard Kurtz's new book, are two related and timely paradoxes. How is it that, at a moment when Bill Clinton has received as much sustained negative press coverage as any president in memory, he enjoys public approval ratings that FDR might envy? And why do major news outlets continue to emphasize every minor detail of what the president does and says, while current American attitudes toward Washington's day-to-day operations waver between indifference and hostility?

Spin Cycle does not give definitive answers. The book does, however, offer one plausible theory: The Clinton administration is extremely adept at media manipulation, so adept that even the perpetual scandal stories are harnessed for political gain.

To illustrate this thesis, Kurtz takes us deep inside the White House press operation. That is not original territory, but, within the confines of the genre, Kurtz has pulled off a minor miracle. White House press secretaries write memoirs, but they tend to be self-serving exercises in political payback: a few White House reporters have tried to capture the emptiness behind the beat's sound and fury.

Kurtz, however, was allowed to bring his journalist's sensitivity to the other side of the podium, and could then compare the news manipulation he uncovered with the journalistic product that it spun out — rather like a media double agent. It's as if documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker (*The War Room*) showed you what stories looked like before and after they were massaged by the Clinton War Room. That level of analysis provides Spin Cycle's best moments. We see White House press secre-

tary Michael McCurry, essentially the book's star, practice a range of tantalizing illusions.

For example, White House reporters spend ridiculous amounts of time in proximity to the president, but most rarely talk to him. So McCurry at times has allowed selected reporters to speak to Clinton "on something called 'psych background,' meaning that reporters could pretend to tap into the president's brain without attributing any comments to the Big Guy." Kurtz quotes from the resulting stories, and while their attempts to suggest the source are sometimes sly, they are all favorable — and the average reader has been seamlessly bamboozled.

Another technique is to leak a mundane story exclusively to one paper — USA Today is especially willing — so that it receives friendly front-page play on one day, followed by catch-up coverage in rival papers the next day. Kurtz also reveals one of the White House's tiny but significant psychological secrets: If TV viewers sense that White House correspondents can barely conceal a sneer as they deliver that day's thin news gruel, very often they're right. The arcane requirements of the press secretary's job sometimes dictate that networks get stories just minutes before the evening broadcast, and correspondents can't help but transmit their frustration at being forced to go on the air unprepared.

PERHAPS most surprising is the way the White House handles the investigative reporters who would seem to be its biggest enemies. During the Senate campaign finance inquiries of 1997, Republicans complained that the White House was leaking damaging information days before it was to be the subject of hearings, in order to deflate the impact of public testimony. Kurtz demonstrates that this was exactly what was going on. In one extreme example, White House attorney Larry Davis complained to Washington Post reporter Susan Schmidt about The Post's coverage of a damaging revelation. Schmidt



White House press secretary Mike McCurry. ILLUSTRATION: ROMAN GENT

said he should be happy the story was buried on page A8, and Davis replied: "You still don't get it. I wanted it on your front page with a glaring headline. That way Fred Thompson's not going to get a glaring headline." Kurtz presents these gems with minimal commentary, like a movie script.

In the end, the reader can't help but conclude that McCurry and his team understand something fundamental about the president's ability to speak directly to the public, an insight that the media have yet to digest. Given the enormous subject matter, there's plenty that Spin Cycle doesn't do. Since it captures events almost instantly — right up to the Monica Lewinsky scandal — Spin Cycle sacrifices most claims to historical understanding. Without a detailed discussion of earlier administrations, there's no way to know whether the Clinton White House has merely updated past scripts or

actually invented Original Spin. There are also larger press criticisms that Spin Cycle suggests but does not explore. Throughout the book, Clinton officials complain legitimately that even the prestigious media spend little time producing well-researched, historically considered stories that would show the administration's triumphs (in areas like student loans and water pollution control). They conclude that the "gotcha" press is, in that crucial sense, biased against them.

It is equally true, though not noted in this book, that even journalists who most enjoy puntomining an adversarial role spend virtually no time presenting comprehensive policy stories that might well show the administration's deeper shortcomings (in areas like NAFTA job creation and welfare reform). In that sense, the scandal-douge press serves the White House's interests quite well.

mentally unstable parent. The uncertainty, emotional exhaustion, and grief are vividly rendered.

Yet it is in the latter half of the book that Jacinto herself makes a statement that best sums up the problem of this first novel: "I'd realized early that no one knew anyone else from the inside." However, the author makes sure that we know a great deal about Jacinto's inside, to the detriment of any other reality.

The first-person narrative, while indeed powerful, gives the novel a claustrophobic quality, a bit like being inside a moving automobile with its windows and doors locked. You long to stretch your legs, sniff the air and look at the scenery, but you cannot get out. The overly plotted structure marches relentlessly forward, seldom giving the writing opportunity to breathe. The occasional anachronism strains the book's plausibility. It is doubtful that "life sucks" was in common usage even among the English upper-classes of the time, let alone part of the vocabulary of a kid from a sturdy working-class background growing up in South London.

The breadth of Lucinda Roy's ambitious scope is to be applauded. I hope that with her next novel she will demonstrate its depth.

Hardcovers in Brief  
NonfictionSierra Nevada: The Naturalist's  
Companion, by Verna R.  
Johnston (California, \$28.95)

THE Sierra Nevada stands alone, writes the author, "as the longest, highest single-block mountain range in the United States. It is slightly over 400 miles long and 50 to 80 miles wide." Verna Johnston seems to have covered almost every one of those square miles, and what she hasn't encountered firsthand — the "extremely rare" wolverine, for example — she reports on courtesy of others' observations. She has seen a cougar, of course, and her evocation of that magnitude is one of the book's set pieces: "The immensity is conveyed by the harmonic proportions. From buttressed base to superstructure they look so perfectly proportional that you hardly notice the twenty-foot width of the trunk or reflect that if one fluted base were moved into a city street it would block it from curb to curb."

Playing to the Camera: Film  
Actors Discuss Their Craft,  
edited by Bert Cardullo, Harry  
Geduld, Ronald Gottsman,  
and Leigh Woods (Yale, \$30)

THE authors of these essays include many of cinema's greats: Charles Chaplin, Lillian Gish, Bette Davis, Marcellino Mastroianni, Jack Nicholson, and others, all expounding on what they did best. Mary Astor conjures up the wiles of things going on — "the habit of little instructions, from crew to crew from director to cameraman" — while an actor is preparing to project intimate emotions. Jeff Danko comments on what makes a fellow actor enjoyable to work with: "Someone who's alive — and that means behind the eyes. I like someone who doesn't have everything preplanned, either, so that they can react to what I do." And Hume Cronyn gives the lie to an old Hollywood shillabout: "The camera... lies like hell and the actor must be prepared to aid in this deception."

John Steuart Curry: Inventing  
the Middle West, by Patricia  
Junkar (Hudson Hills, \$30)

JOHN Steuart Curry (1897-1946). According to fellow "American Regionalist" Thomas Hart Benton, "never forgot that he came off a Kansas farm, that his folks were plain Kansas folks whose lives were spent with the plain, elemental things of earth and sky. His art and the meanings of his art were never cut loose from his background. To the end his ideal audience was the Kansas audience. Dealing with what he knew about, John wanted his art to be more than anything else, life. He didn't get it." Curry's images stay close to the heartland but also go beyond it, to an America that's edenic, mythic, leaning toward an isolationist's sense of the tragic in his 1938 painting "Parade to War." The soldiers resemble skeletons even before they've left home. Curry's down-on-the-farm scenes such as his "Kansas Pastoral" sequence for the Kansas statehouse in Topeka — including "The Unmolested Farm" and "Farmers' Family" — take scenes of domestic husbandry and make them epic. Curry's Midwest is a place of hope and golden wheat fields and good strong souls.

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## Asia crisis 'poses further threats to growth'

Alex Brummer in Washington

THE crisis in Asia is far from over and may pose a further threat to global growth, according to the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook report published this week. The troubles in East Asia, exacerbated by the uncertainties over Japan's economy, have forced the IMF to downgrade its forecast for global growth this year to 3 per cent, against the 3.5 per cent it predicted in December and the 4.5 per cent expansion projected last autumn.

This confirms that the IMF has consistently underestimated the impact of the crisis in Asia on output and trade in industrial and developing countries.

The biggest downward revisions have been seen in Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand, where, IMF economists report, "the drying up of private foreign financing together

with the large currency depreciations and declines in asset prices are causing sharp contractions in domestic demand."

It has cut its growth forecast for Asia's newly industrialised countries by 4.2 per cent to just 1.8 per cent.

The IMF's chief economist, Michael Mussa, warned of a possible further decline in output from Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand. He is also worried about India, where the budget deficit is uncomfortably high, and China, where the IMF expects growth to fall to 7 per cent in 1998. But the Fund is predicting an Asian bounce-back next year.

The IMF has also cut growth projections for 1998 in the industrial world by 0.5 of a percentage point to 2.4 per cent. However, British growth is still seen at 2.3 per cent, a more benign prediction than that from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris earlier this month.

The biggest potential problem for the industrialised nations is Japan. IMF staff argue that although Japan's downturn (it will be in recession for the first half of this year) has been exacerbated by the Asian crisis, many of its problems are homegrown. They point to the financial sector, notably the bad loans bedevilling its banking system; the delays in reform to restructure the economy; and the decision to remove fiscal stimulus last year when the economy was too fragile.

While the IMF has hopes that a new package of tax cuts and public spending may help to improve Japan's economy in the second half of this year, it fears recovery could be impeded in 1999 by fiscal tightening and urges Japan to introduce further measures.

Among the rest of the rich economies, growth has been sustained by recovery in Western Europe and robust growth in the

Anglo-Saxon economies of the United States, Canada and Britain. In Germany output will increase from 2.5 per cent to 2.8 per cent, and expansion in France will be even stronger.

The report predicts that the strength of the pound could soon start to reverse itself, providing some much-needed relief for the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and British exporters. The surge of the pound — up more than 30 per cent in a year — has created havoc for UK manufacturers and has put Mr Brown under pressure to lower its value.

The IMF expects the pound to "correct downwards against other European currencies" as the deficit in Britain's balance of payments increases and growth in the European economy surges past the UK.

The IMF still has serious concerns about European monetary union (EMU), particularly the lack of flexibility in labour markets. It

fears that Europe, without the ability to adjust exchange rates after EMU, could face even higher unemployment unless it tackles the labour market problems.

The IMF also seems more cautious about the US economy. It notes that the consequences of the strong dollar together with the Asian crisis will lead to a swelling of the current account deficit to \$230 billion this year, some 2.75 per cent of gross domestic product. This, together with the strength of asset prices in the US economy, may lead the US Federal Reserve to raise interest rates.

Mr Mussa suggested that the world economy could tolerate a correction of 20 per cent in the US stock markets without much real impact — although a fall of 50 per cent would be a different matter.

The Asian crisis is also taking its toll in Latin America, where the IMF estimates it has wiped out 1.5 per cent of growth this year, though output will still be up by 3.4 per cent.

World Economic Outlook report published by the IMF, Washington

## When Mammon takes on God

The financial markets  
maybe eyeing the Church  
but there's life in religion  
yet, writes Larry Elliott

IN THE wake of last summer's flurry of building society and insurance company stock market flotations, the City looked around for other mutual organisations that could be "put into play".

The Co-op, the Automobile Association and Bupa are all seen as potential targets, but HSBC came up with the ultimate mutual organisation for re-engineering: the Church. It all makes sense for the financial world. The Church is a strong brand, an instantly recognisable product — religion — and assets in prime locations around the country.

Moreover it has been underperforming for years, seeing its customer base desert it for the DIY superstore and garden centre. Last Sunday was the high point of the Christian calendar, yet it is unlikely that more than one in four adults in Britain went to church. Something is going wrong — but nothing that management consultants and focus groups could not put right.

The subject of all this, however, is that the Church — at least in its present form — is finished. God has been defeated by Mammon, with most people only seeing the inside of a church for a wedding, itself now such an act of conspicuous consumption that for many the extravagance of the occasion is more important than the act itself.

But how much of this is true? Can man live by bread alone now? Or is there some deep spiritual need still to be satisfied?

If the mass hysteria that followed the death of Diana is anything to go by, there is still a yearning for something to believe in. It is hard, otherwise, to explain the iconography, the collective show of faith and the intolerance of those who refused to give in to the "correct" way.

At the same time, television is providing its own, warped form of the confessional with talk-shows in which a participant confesses to

having sex with the mother-in-law, or some other "sin". Meanwhile the innocent party is publicly humiliated. The justification for this "entertainment" is that it is giving the punters what they want, presumably in the same way as Christians were teased to the lions to amuse the citizens of ancient Rome.

In the end decadence took its toll. Although ancient Rome was technologically advanced and seemed militarily impregnable, by the time it was beset by the barbarian hordes it had been hollowed out from within.

During the thousand years between the demise of Rome and the Reformation, the role of the Church changed. It ceased to be a solvent and became the orthodox. Having been a force for change in its early years, the Catholic Church became a force that related change.

In his book *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, David Landes argues that there was a link between the countries that adopted Protestantism and economic development.

"In manufacturing centres in France and western Germany, Protestants were typically the employers, Catholics the employed," he writes.

In Switzerland the Protestant cantons were the centres of the export manufacturing industry; the Catholic ones were primarily agricultural. In England, which by the end of the 18th century was disproportionately active and influential in the factories and forges of the nascent industrial revolution.

Landes highlights two reasons why the Protestant communities forged ahead — the emphasis on literacy for both boys and girls so that everybody could read the Bible, and the observance with the management of time.

By contrast, Spain and Portugal lost out because "religious passion and military crusade drove away the outsiders and discouraged the pursuit of the strange and potentially heretical".

"The Protestant Reformation... changed the rules. It gave a boost to literacy, spawned dissent and heresy and promoted the scepticism



and refusal of authority at the heart of the scientific endeavour. The Catholic countries, instead of meeting the challenge, responded by closure and censorship."

As a result, the events of the 16th century were pivotal in the development of the modern world.

As Richard Tawney put it in *Religion and The Rise of Capitalism*: "When the age of the Reformation begins, economics is still a branch of ethics, and ethics of theology; all human activities are treated as falling within a single scheme whose character is determined by the spiritual destiny of mankind. The appeal of theorists is to natural law, not utility; the legitimacy of economic transactions is tied by reference less to movements of the market than to moral standards derived from the traditional teaching of the Christian Church."

However, the most important mechanisms by which the medieval Church exerted economic influence — the idea of the just wage and the ban on usury — were quickly swept away and religion was converted "from the keystone which holds together the social edifice into one department within it, and the idea of the rule of right is replaced by economic expediency as the arbiter of policy and the criterion of conduct".

Tawney's warning in 1922 is, if anything, even more pertinent today, when the market is treated as a god, and the high priests of the new orthodoxy are the technocrats who

## High-rise year for US bosses

Joanna Coles in New York

UNCONCERNED by the fact that the average pay rise for their white-collar staff was a mere 3.8 per cent last year, American chief executives have enjoyed a salary increase of 35 per cent in the same period.

At the top of the league is Sanford Weill, who heads the Travelers Group and now takes home \$230.7 million.

Meanwhile Henry Silverman, chief executive of Cendant, who does not appear in the top 10 salary league, can at least take comfort when it comes to stock options. In the league of packages, his \$832.9 million holds top position.

Michael Eisner, chairman of the Walt Disney Corporation, received "total compensation", including salary and stock options which he cashed, of \$524.7 million. The late Roberto Goizueta, who until he died last year headed Coca-Cola, took home \$111 million, most of which was in stock options he also cashed.

Richard Scrushy weighs in at number three in the salary chart, taking home \$106 million. His rise is remarkable given the speed with which he built his company HealthSouth from an initial investment of \$50,000 only 14 years ago. He is in fourth place on package remuneration with \$216 million.

Business Week magazine, which compiles the list of America's top-earning executives, commented: "Good, bad or indifferent, virtually anyone who has spent time in a corner office of a large public company saw his or her net worth rise by several million."

There are no women on either list.

While the average increase for blue-collar workers was 2.6 per cent, Business Week pointed out that overall the rise for top executives was actually less than the 52 per cent increase they enjoyed the previous year.

But the pay cheques were bigger than ever before.

## Chronicles Across the Continents

Bonnie Greer

LADY MOSES  
By Lucinda Roy  
HarperCollins. 382 pp. \$24

SINCE a great deal of contemporary African-American women's fiction takes place exclusively within the confines of the United States and the American experience, it often has a kind of comforting familiarity. However, this narrowness of focus can too often cause weaker books to descend into a kind of parochialism, to become mired in bathos and laden with platitudes. Perhaps the next level is to be found in the wider world, where African Americans can write in a larger context. The poet Lucinda Roy, with her debut novel, *Lady Moses*, faces the challenge head-on.

This ambitious book chronicles, in three parts, life in the South London of the 1960s, the Virginia of the 1970s, and the West Africa of the 1980s. The saga of Jacinta Louise Buttercup Moses and her road to redemption also encompasses the story of her black African writer-father, Simon Moses,

and her white English actress-mother, Louise Buttercup.

The parts are framed by an account of Jacinta's return, with her daughter Lady, to witness the death and burial of the strong and eccentric Louise. This journey fuels Jacinta's memories of her poverty-stricken but happy bohemian childhood, which also included Ruskin Garland, the writer-warlock friend of her father, and Alfred Russell-Smyth, the flamboyantly homosexual friend of her mother. But when Simon Moses died suddenly, Louise Buttercup went mad, and Jacinta was placed in a foster home of Dickensian squalor inhabited by ailing, urine-soaked babies and her foster mother's seedy husband. With her childhood idyll over, this daughter of both Africa and Europe was subjected to a sexual assault by the sinister Maurice Beadycap. She also witnessed the death of her friend, whose blackness she loved to see against the snow.

Jacinta survives to marry a white American writer, Emmanuel Fox III, who duly whisks her off to America and away from the dismal reality of her life in England. Unfortunately,

Manny Fox turns out to be a brute, liar and madman who terrifies his own mother. He callously rejects their disabled daughter, Lady, but the marriage is salvaged when Jacinta consents to go to Africa with him for a work project.

There she meets Esther Cole, an internationally acclaimed singer, and most important, John Turay, a mine-worker whose love restores her to herself. Manny's subsequent death in a car accident provides both Jacinta and Lady with an opportunity to forge a new life.

LUCINDA ROY'S talent lies in the miniature. She has the ability to paint a scene or evoke an emotion with the minimum of words. Her account of Jacinta's giving away her brassiere to a market woman; the way the one-armed Lady looks while swimming; the image of a house on stilts high above the African soil — these are beautifully and precisely told. Julie Andrews's smile makes "a streak across the screen the way headlights do in those night photographs." Most poignant of all, Roy captures a child's terror in living with a

The IMF Co 13/98



Rachel Baird on how new guidelines may help resolve the dilemma that many charities face over funding from big business

## Finding a balance in the books

HOW should charities decide which donations to accept and which to reject? Should development agencies, for example, accept or seek money from the oil giant BP? Several development charities are discussing the possibility of forming relationships with the company, and a senior fund-raiser with at least one of them is watching helpfully.

Help for charities agonising over whether to reject donations from a particular source appeared last month in the form of guidelines from Britain's Institute of Charity Fund-raising Managers (ICFM). The hope was to clarify what the director, Stephen Lee, says is the "murky" and fragmented law on the matter.

Legally and ethically, he says, "it is actually very difficult for registered charities to refuse voluntary donations". Trustees have a responsibility to maximise benefits for the charity's beneficiaries and must not allow their personal views to affect decisions on particular donations.

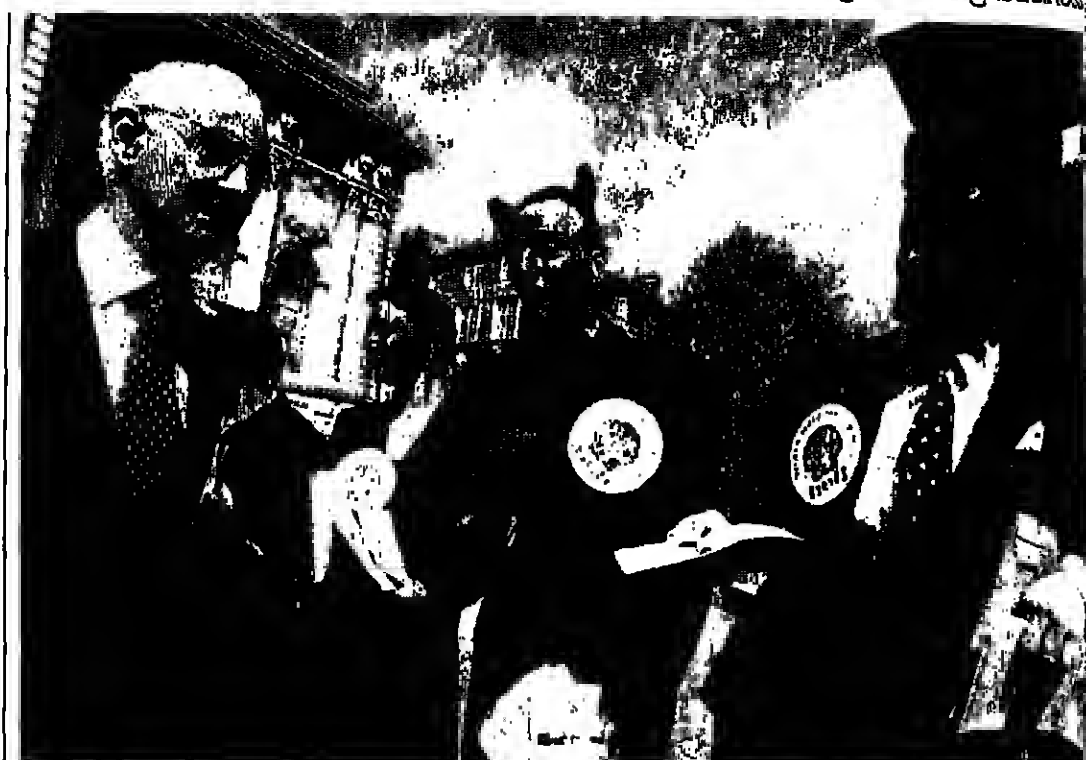
There are, however, three situations in which donations can properly be turned away: where money is clearly the product of criminal activity; where the aims of the donor are entirely inimical to the charity's — tobacco manufacturers and cancer charities being the obvious example; and where charities can show that accepting the money would be likely to cause a net fall in the resources available to their beneficiaries, because other donors would be upset and stop giving.

The National Childbirth Trust in the UK recently learned the hard way that taking \$86,000 from formula-milk producer Sainsbury's would cause internal strife and had publicity. It also published a set of guidelines on donations last month. The guidelines divide potential sources of donations into three areas: "no go" — for example, companies that sell own-brand formula milk, and arms and tobacco manufacturers; "grey" — for example, alcohol; and "generally OK" — for example, banks and pushchair makers.

The trust's guidelines also apply to sponsorship. Companies are increasingly keen on this sort of higher-profile giving because it boosts their reputations far more effectively than a discreet cheque in the post. But there are greater risks involved. "It makes you more vulnerable to any sense that you might have been compromised in some way," says head of fund-raising, Andy Keen Downs.

Some other charities have developed policies to help them decide with whom to do sponsorship deals, even though donations are not automatically screened. Christian Aid has a 13-point list of activities with which it will not be associated. The Cancer Research Campaign, in contrast, has a blanket policy of no tobacco money, but it looks at other potential relationships on a case-by-case basis.

Apart from the danger of a charity being tarnished by association, there is also a danger that the company will exert — or be seen to



Devil's advocates... Protesters hand out leaflets for Friends of the Earth at a Shell conference in London last year. But should they accept a donation from the oil giant?

exert — improper influence over a charity. Ruth Jarratt, Age Concern's fund-raising and marketing director, says: "The critical consideration for any charity is whether you're being bought off" — persuaded to tone down campaigns that damage a company, for example.

Yet Age Concern, Christian Aid and Friends of the Earth say they may be willing to work with companies whose practices are not ideal, but where they believe there is the potential to bring about positive change.

Fund-raising managers agree that there are some hard, fine-line decisions to be made. But some fear that

certain charities are neglecting morality and behaving too much like companies themselves.

The Funding for a Change movement grew from one charity's dilemma about taking money from Shell, following the execution of Ogoni activists in Nigeria. Since May 1996 the movement has brought together more than 100 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at a series of meetings to discuss the terms on which to engage with companies. The hope is to agree a manifesto that will be the basis for a dialogue between an alliance of NGOs and the corporate world. Ben Grettton, of Platform, which

co-ordinates Funding for a Change, says his impression of a recent National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) seminar on fund-raising "with a conscience" was that "a lot of the big charities were behaving like corporations themselves, in terms of not having an ethical framework for decisions". And one key condition for public support, identified in the Debate report on the voluntary sector and in the conclusions of the NCVO seminar, is openness. If a source of income or other support is legitimate, then surely charities — like political parties — should be willing to publish it.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
April 19 1998

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
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## International Service project workers, West Bank & Gaza Strip

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## The Humanitarian Challenge: Refugees and Displaced Persons

1 - 12 June 1998



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## HEAD OF REGIONAL OFFICE Southeast & East Asia/Pacific £25,123

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The Guardian Weekly

## A sorry apology from Clinton

CITY OF WORDS  
John Ryle

THE English are famous for saying sorry, apologising at the drop of a hat. It does not mean they feel guilty or accept responsibility. "Sorry" is ambiguous: it may signify condolence without remorse, or it may mean they are really sorry, repentant as well as regretful. Sorry's not the hardest word. What is hard is knowing what it means.

It's not just the English. The state of public apologies by world leaders merits acerbic examination. Tony Blair has apologised for the Irish famine; the Japanese prime minister has apologised for the second world war; the Pope has apologised — or repented — for the behaviour of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust. And the United States president has apologised — in Africa — for slavery. But it is not quite clear who is saying sorry to whom. Or on whose behalf. Or how sorry they really are.

During President Clinton's tour of Africa he apologised not once but twice: in Uganda he apologised for the slave trade; in Rwanda he apologised for Western inaction in the face of the Rwanda genocide. Back at home Clinton was attacked by the right for "groveling and pandering" during his African tour. They pointed out that the slaves who were shipped to North America came not from Uganda but from West Africa, that on both sides of the continent Africans themselves were also involved in the slave trade, and that slavery will exist today in Sudan and Mauritania. From the left it was argued

that if there was to be an apology it should be directed not at Africans but at black Americans.

It was certainly odd that Clinton chose Uganda for his statement, rather than Senegal, where he went a week later, making a special visit to the 18th century slave depot on Gorée Island. On Gorée he could have taken a look at the museum of slavery, an exemplary exhibit that pulls no punches on the participation of Arabs and Africans in the slave trade — as well as the British, the Dutch, the French and half a dozen other European nations.

Clearly, to demand a multifaceted apology from the governments of all countries whose present-day citizens may have had ancestors involved in the slave trade is impractical. If an apology is desirable, there is nothing wrong with one successor government leading the way. But the phrasing of Clinton's apology reveals the difficulties this entails. "Going back", he said, "in the time before we were even a nation, European Americans received the fruits of the slave trade. And we were wrong in that."

To say slavery was wrong is hardly contentious. But in conflating the "European Americans" of the 19th century with a contemporary presidential "we" is problematic. On the one hand there is the extensive subsequent genetic mixing between blacks and whites and the fact that a large proportion of European immigration occurred well after the end of slavery. On the other is the oddity of the idea of inherited moral responsibility, of the visiting of the sins of the fathers on the sons.

You might argue that if contemporary Americans of so-called European descent are "wrong", it is not because some of their ancestors benefited from the slave trade but because they are all still benefiting from the historical advantage this gave them. This, though, would raise the question of financial reparations. In Africa, too, debt relief would be more useful than expressions of regret. But both of these are areas, with real-world financial implications, that Clinton does not want to get into.

In the case of Rwanda, Clinton is on even sicker ground. Here, it seems, he was moved to apologise on behalf of the entire world: "The international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of the responsibility for this tragedy."

We did not set quickly enough after the killing began," Clinton's acknowledgment of Western ineptitude in the face of this tragedy is welcome, but the apology is disingenuous. Non-intervention was US policy, not an oversight. It learned its lesson in Somalia. And Clinton neglected to mention the more recent massacres of Rwandan Hutus in the Congo. This time the killings were perpetrated largely by units of the Rwandan army, the army of a government enjoying direct US support; the government now favoured with a presidential visit. The US government knew about these massacres and did nothing.

Clinton's apologies in Africa were not exactly insincere but they were clearly subliminal to political interests. And in politics you only say sorry when it suits you.

## Boulder — an island of PC values in a redneck pond

Simon Hoggart

I SPENT last week in Boulder, Colorado, in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. It was the setting for the annual Conference on World Affairs, which sounds boring, but isn't. Like most campus towns in the Old West, Boulder is an island of liberal chic amid the gun-toting rednecks and fundamentalists we assume are all around us. There may be more places offering falafel than hamburgers.

It's not true, as alleged, that the police give an incense stick with every speeding ticket, but the bus drivers can choose their own music. Mine picked Mahler. The joke goes: "How many Boulders does it take to change a lightbulb? None; they just form a support group called 'Coping with darkness'."

On Sunday my hosts and I went to watch a street comedian downtown. He made two-headed balloon animals called "Chernobyl dogs". When a man went by on a bike, pulling a sort of wheeled tent with a baby inside, he shrugged scornfully and said: "Boulder dad."

The conference brings together about 120 people from around the world to Colorado university. South of the city, the great historian of 20th-century America, gave an extraordinary speech in a voice which sounded like Jimmy Durante, powerful and funny, sometimes bitter but just as often hopeful.

One of the more attractive things about American radicals is that, unlike the harsh cynics of the modern British left, they have a terrific streak of optimism, in his way, social justice and union rights are just as much a part of the American dream

as two cars and a house with central vacuuming.

He was sharp about the way corporations and technology combine to order us about. "I was in the Atlanta airport, and I caught the little monitor they have there. A young couple ran on as the doors were closing and an electronic disembodied voice said: 'Due to late entry, there will be a 30-second delay, and everyone just glared furiously at this couple. So I shouted up to the loudspeaker: 'George Orwell — your time has come — and gone', so they all glowered at me instead."

Naturally the No 1 subject for the week has been what's known here as the presidential pecker. (You can now buy a "White House Intern Kit" including a pair of kneecaps and a breath mint.)

Molly Ivins, the celebrated Texas columnist, had just been in Canada. "Our neighbours in the north are the most reasonable people on the face of the earth. For them, it must be like living next door to the Simpsons." Like many feminists, Molly is on the president's side — a source of some bafflement, especially to those non-feminist men who think his behaviour disgusting and unacceptable.

Molly's general point was that it has nothing to do with Clinton's political skills, which remain considerable. Even those American liberals who don't believe there is a unified conspiracy against Clinton know there is a confluence of unmet interests desperate to get rid of him. The gist of what they're saying is: "Yes, what he does is unacceptable. But, this is our battle against the right that we cannot afford to lose." They don't then add: "So we'll just have to swallow hard and put up with it," but that's what they mean.

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1. April 19 1998



As Europe's supermarket shelves groan under the weight of African goods, **Fred Pearce** asks whether the new agro-industries are helping local economies or destroying both the environment and jobs

## Bloom or bust?

**A**FRICAN exports are booming. Scan the supermarket shelves of Marks & Spencer or Waitrose in Britain and beside the traditional exports of coffee and tea you will find asparagus from South Africa, sweetcorn from Zimbabwe, beans from Gambia and, above all, produce from Kenya.

Thanks to a transfer of European hot-house technology to the plains of East Africa, Kenya is fast turning into a major source of winter vegetables. They don't come cheap, of course (at M&S, Kenyan "hand-trimmed" green beans currently retail at \$10 a kilo), but they are of high quality and available in the depths of winter.

And Kenya has even supplemented the Netherlands as a major source of cut flowers. In greenhouses, chill rooms and packing halls across Kenya I watched thousands of flowers being grown, harvested, trimmed, packed and labelled for shipment to Britain. And I saw orders coming in from UK supermarkets for green vegetables and ready-prepared salads that would be delivered to the shelves within 48 hours.

The latest technology is all there: tinted lenses for roses, which grow faster in red light; floodlights on the runner beans to mimic long European summer evenings; drip irrigation that the Israelis would be proud of; soil probes to monitor moisture and fertiliser levels.

Growers such as Dicky Evans, the British-born boss of Homegrown, the leading flower firm in Kenya, have turned horticulture into a top export industry for Kenya, alongside tea, coffee and tourism. It all began 15 years ago when Evans, an irrigation engineer, went into partnership with a vegetable grower selling to Asian markets in the UK. Soon he was trucking beans to the airport himself, to cut out unreliable exporters, and diversifying into other crops.

Today he has nine farms across the country, growing flowers by a hippo lake in the Rift Valley and green vegetables at Timau, on the slopes of Mount Kenya. His produce is mostly on supermarket shelves in the UK two days after being harvested.

Evans makes his money by "adding value" in Kenya. "We started putting the vegetables into bags here, then topping and tailing them, then putting labels on," he

says. His flowers, too, are "pruned, sleeved and labelled" locally, right down to the bar code and price sticker. Pursued by ambitious copycat operators (including one run by President Daniel arap Moi's son, Gideon), Evans now puts together entire bouquets and ready-prepared salads.

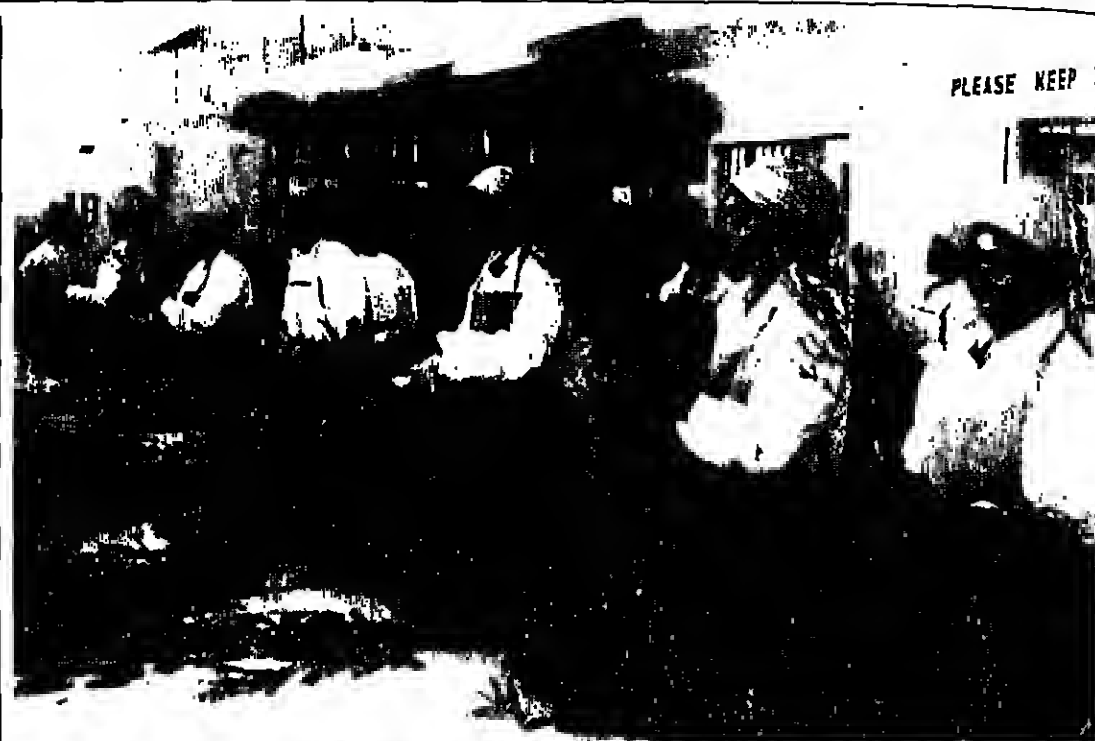
You'd think M&S might be touchy about buying ready-prepared salads from a country with a cholera epidemic (albeit not in areas where Homegrown has farms). But such is Homegrown's dedication to hygiene that there appears to be little cause for concern.

Evans rates himself a model employer and good neighbour. Pay is \$1,200 a year, "the same as Moscow", and roughly five times the Kenyan national average. "They used to need famine aid up in Timau," he says. "But now we are a major element in a thriving rural economy." However, he wasn't so popular last summer when Homegrown's operation dried up two local rivers at the height of the dry season — an event that has forced him to build a reservoir to capture seasonal flood waters.

Evans gets into spats with critics, though more with white liberals than indigenous Africans. He brushes off criticisms about pesticides polluting a protected lake or "Deep South" plantation conditions on his farms managed by expatriate Britons. Charged with contributing to global warming through his air-freight mileage, he responds that transporting a Kenyan rose to Europe uses less energy than the extra heating and lighting involved in growing the same stem in, say, the Netherlands.

He has drawn up a detailed environmental code of conduct for the Kenyan flower industry where, he admits, toxic pesticides are widely employed. At Homegrown all staff are given regular tests for cholinesterase, the body enzyme vital to the nervous system that can be suppressed by pesticides such as organophosphates. How many British farmers do that? And most of his critics concede that he acts on criticisms.

Many people wonder if growing green beans and red roses for Britain is a proper activity for a



Cut above the rest... flowers are packaged for the British market

country on the headline, with disease on the rampage, bandits in the hills and infrastructure crumbling after decades of neglect and corruption. But this is a transfer of technology from developed to developing countries that has worked. It employs people; puts money in their pockets without wrecking their health; and shows every sign of being environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. And if you think the above is a bit of a puff, it is because technology transfer is not always done the Dicky Evans way.

Take Kenya's other big new export to Europe — Nile perch. Some time in the 1950s, British colonial fisheries officers threw some Nile

longer afford them because the price had soared.

Traditional fish-processing and mongering businesses in lakeside villages folded and all the perches were packed off to giant state-of-the-art filleting factories for export. Factories in the Kenyan lakeside town of Kisumu alone processed 200 tonnes of Nile perch a day — mostly for sale in Europe.

This is an efficiently run industry: the overall factory capacity is twice what fishermen can find to bring ashore and the perches are clearly being overfished — Kenyan catches are now only two-thirds what they were in 1989, and fish less than a kilogram in weight are regularly caught as net mesh sizes

have come down from 30cm to 10cm or less. Some people have made a lot of money out of this, mostly the factory owners in

Nairobi, Israel, the East Asia and London. But a report last year by Erik Jensen of the World Conservation Union and Richard Abila of the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute concluded that very little of the massive foreign exchange revenue is ploughed back into the fishing areas.

Five times as many fish still come out of the lake as 20 years ago, but the industry today provides far fewer jobs and less income for the lakeside communities. The report says that some 15,000 jobs have been lost in the traditional fishing industry compared with just 2,400 created in the Kisumu processing factories.

a few resettlements live up to the Chinese government's policy and promises. These are mainly the "model examples of resettlement" which cost, on average, four times more than a typical operation of this kind.

A major problem is the lack of suitable resettlement land. About 30 per cent of the available land is too steep to farm. As much as 80 per cent is severely eroded. One peasant described resettlement sites as "looking like ditches from a distance and pigsties on closer inspection".

Many relocatees have simply returned to their homes in the flood zone. Resettlement officials have tried to cover up these failures by ordering local people to pose for smiling aerial photographs as happily resettled peasants or townsmen.

Kisumu is the poorest, worst fed city in Kenya. And out in the rural areas things are even worse. A few of the old fish processors linger, living off the scraps from the European table. In Ohauwa, a wretched shanty settlement behind the brewery in Kisumu, they cluster each morning around hand-carts delivering the factory left-overs: the skeletons, guts, skins and scraps of meat that are discarded by the filleting operation.

Here an army of some 600 people, mostly women, buy, cut up, dry and fry these scraps for sale throughout Kenya and neighbouring Rwanda, and even Zaire. The going rate for these scraps is 5 cents a kilo, compared with \$4 a kilo for fillets in Nairobi fish shops.

According to Bernard Onyango, who introduced himself as secretary of one of the "committees" running the operation in Ohauwa, the 150 people working with him process a tonne of fish on a good day, producing a typical profit share-out of \$30. And things are getting worse. "As processing in the factories gets better," he says, "we get less flesh on the skeletons." Meanwhile prices rise because of competition from fish-meal factories in Nairobi.

In the past 20 years the fisheries of Lake Victoria have become part of the global economy, much as the Kenyan horticulture industry has. Around the flower and vegetable centres the benefits to locals of this technology transfer can be seen everywhere. But on Lake Victoria the new fish-processing technology has exploited, impoverished, degraded and even starved the local fishing communities.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
April 19 1998

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
April 19 1998

Letter from southern Spain Joanna Crowson

## All washed up

**S**TRANGE things wash up on the southern beaches of Fortress Europe. From my balcony I have an excellent view of the beach and the *Paseo Marítimo*. Recently, groups of young men were to be seen strolling up and down, looking out to sea, apparently enjoying the view. They occasionally stopped and peered intently out to sea, arousing the interest of others loitering nearby. Still others raced up and down the wide, sandy beach on their motorbikes.

Suddenly there was a commotion and the cry went out: "¡Paquete!" The young men converged on a package and hauled it in to shallow water. Nothing could be seen of the parcel itself for the heaving crowd around it.

Soon young men began to break away: hands thrust quickly down the front of their trousers and they were off, running away awkwardly with wet shoes and bouncing trousers. Others quickly took their place in the scrum.

It was all over in 15 minutes and the beach slowly emptied, except for a hessian rag slopping in the shallows.

With 45 per cent unemployment, and more than 70 per cent of the population depending directly or indirectly on a dying fishing industry, these unexpected windfalls must be a welcome addition to the local economy.

Many young men in Barbate with no hope of employment have become *busquemeros*, earning their

living hauling away the bundles of cannibals illegally shipped in from Morocco by night. You can spot them easily about town — they are the lads with costly trials bikes. But this latest cargo came ashore in broad daylight, package by package, destined never to reach the markets of northern Europe. The consignment was snatched up by anyone caring to participate.

It is not the first time this had happened. Last December, after a collision at sea, 100kg washed up just outside town. The police, in their unwieldy Nissan Patrols, gave chase to dozens of young men on mopeds, rupturing the calm of a normally deserted beach. The following week more mopeds were sold in Barbate than in Madrid, and the local moped shops sold out. It was a blessing in disguise — from the point of view of the victims of a devastated economy.

Today I saw four packages come ashore. More and more people

crowd the beach front, watching with tolerant interest. I was enthralled by the air of holiday excitement and the unusual sight of people flouting the law so publicly. There is, of course, safety in numbers.

Finally, towards the end of the afternoon, two Civil Guards turned up, and the beach cleared. They walked up and down the beach in unwelcome parody of Barbate's young men until night fall.

**M**Y NEIGHBOUR called by and, telling me that what has washed ashore is "best quality pollen", offered me a smoke. Conscious of my reputation as a teacher I refused. He wanted cigarette paper to roll a joint but, as there wasn't any, resorted to a piece torn out of the *Guardian Weekly*.

The next day my eight-year-old students caused me endless trouble shouting "¡Paquete!" to one another across the classroom. The recent

events are already immortalised in children's games designed to torture the teacher.

Now that the excitement is over, I am mindful of the other, less pleasant packages that wash up all too frequently along this coast. These are the "wetbacks", another export from Morocco, illegal immigrants who fail to make it into Europe alive.

Countless others survive the difficult, dangerous and expensive crossing, only to be rounded up, imprisoned and sent straight back. A few reach relative safety and jobs in the greenhouses of Almería.

Further along this treacherous coast, built at great public expense and placed above the Strait of Gibraltar, is the sculpture of a hand held out to Africa. In theory it represents Europe offering a symbolic helping hand to its poorer neighbours. I think it looks more like a hand held up with a clear and final message: "Stop. Fortress Europe. No entry."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

**H**OW did Action Man get that scar on his face?

**A**CTION Man's designers wanted to patent the figure — known as GI Joe in the United States. But lawyers advised them that there was little chance of patenting the human body, so they added the scar and were then able to patent it. — Alan Lloyd, Schaumburg, Illinois, USA

**W**HEN was the last man "pressed" into the Royal Navy?

**T**HE Navy last used impressment during the war between Britain and the United States in 1812. Indeed, the practice was substantially the cause of the war — Royal Navy ships having been press-ganging British-born seamen from American vessels to fight against the French.

When, 40 years later, the Royal Navy next fought a major war (in the Crimea), the decision was made to proceed without impressment — and the success of this policy resulted in the practice falling into abeyance.

The power, in occasions of need, to impress into the Royal Navy any person of a seafaring character — excluding ferrymen and gentlemen — does, however, remain within the royal prerogative; although the royal warrant to the naval authorities does not currently permit this power to be exercised. — Tom Hennell, Whittington, Cheshire

**W**HAT is scruggin', as in scruggin' cake?

**I**N MY climbing and hill-walking days my Australian friend carried a tin of "scruggin'" as emergency ration. This consisted of a mixture of oatmeal, nuts, dried fruit, chocolate and a little fat. It was stuffed into a tin and provided additional energy when required. It could also be used as a fuel source to heat a drink, and its use may have saved many lives. — Brian Palmer, Noke Side, Hertfordshire

**W**HY, on encountering cold air, does my nose run?

**C**ONTRARY to David Boulton's theory about condensation (March 22), a runny nose is caused by an activity in the parasympathetic nervous system (the "auto-

matic" part of our nervous system that controls body functions such as pulse, circulation, breathing, temperature, etc.), in response to cold air several things can happen, one of which is the parasympathetic system stimulating increased activity in the nasal mucus glands. Thus your nose runs. — Jim Kaise, Blenheim, New Zealand

**O**N THE back of a fruit juice carton it says "the cranberry is one of the only three fruits native to North America". Is this true?

**A**PART from persimmons, your lengthening list of genuinely native American fruits should also include pawpaws (*Annona asimina triloba*) and papayas (*Carica papaya*). Contrary to much ill-informed opinion — most of it British — these two fruits are not identical; they are unrelated. It should be noted that the persimmon, pawpaw and papaya all bear native American names and that among them only the persimmon has a real parallel elsewhere, in the Japanese kaki. Of similar interest are the native American muscadines, especially the North Carolina scuppernon. — John Rodenbeck, Cairo, Egypt

## Any answers?

**D**OES any creature (apart from a human) show any appreciation of music — be it as rhythm or melody? — John Kearney, Crosby, Merseyside

**A**RE there still trawlermen lunched over radios reliant on the BBC radio shipping forecasts for their only source of weather information? — Matt Hurst, Carrington, Nottingham

**H**OW are television viewing figures calculated? How much of a programme do I have to watch before I am deemed to have "viewed" it? — Hallin Jones, Cottingham, Yorkshire

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171-44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at <http://nq.guardian.co.uk/>

## Flood of complaints over Yangtze dam project

Catherine Caulfield

**C**HINA "will have to rely on the military or a man-made flood to force people out of their homes" to complete the giant Three Gorges dam on the Yangtze River, says a senior Chinese official involved in moving the 1.2 million or more people that the dam will displace.

The anonymous official's statement comes in a study released last month by the International Rivers Network, in Berkeley, California, and

Human Rights in China, a monitoring group based in New York.

It reports that "the largest forced resettlement ever undertaken" is plagued by bad planning, lack of land, inadequate funds and official corruption. The study's author, a Chinese social scientist and expert in resettlement projects associated with Chinese dams, uses the pseudonym Wu Ming ("no name") as protection against reprisals.

The Three Gorges Project Resettlement Bureau claims

that 100,000 people have been moved in the five years since resettlement began, but Wu Ming calculates that the true number is fewer than 50,000. If the dam is to begin generating electricity in 2003 and be completed in 2009, at least 100,000 people will have to be moved every year for the next decade.

Both deadlines are crucial because the officials are counting on electricity sales starting in 2003 for a large part of the dam's financing.

According to the report, only

a few resettlements live up to the Chinese government's policy and promises. These are mainly the "model examples of resettlement" which cost, on average, four times more than a typical operation of this kind.

A major problem is the lack of suitable resettlement land. About 30 per cent of the available land is too steep to farm. As much as 80 per cent is severely eroded. One peasant described resettlement sites as "looking like ditches from a distance and pigsties on closer inspection".

Many relocatees have simply returned to their homes in the flood zone. Resettlement officials have tried to cover up these failures by ordering local people to pose for smiling aerial photographs as happily resettled peasants or townsmen.

Urbanites, especially those working for government agencies, seem to be faring best. Many well-constructed offices and apartment buildings have been built with resettlement funds specifically for government employees.

But the virtual bankruptcy of most state firms means the government is unlikely to be able to keep its promise to create hundreds of thousands of new industrial jobs for the displaced.

## Sahara tribe first to reach for the stars

Tim Radford

**S**TONE AGE people built the first astronomical observatory centuries before anyone thought. Scientists working in the Sahara have identified a series of megaliths that predate Stonehenge in Britain and other sites by more than 1,000 years. Around 6,500 years ago an unknown people living in Nabta, in southern Egypt, began dragging slabs of stone, nearly 3 metres high, into position on the west bank of the Nile.

The alignments run north-south and east-west, and point to the sun where astronomers estimate its solstice would have been 6,000 years ago.

"This is the oldest documented astronomical alignment of megaliths in the world," says Professor McIlm Malville of the University of Colorado at Boulder, who — with colleagues from the United States, Egypt and Poland — has completed a satellite survey of the stones. "A lot of effort went into the construction of a purely symbolic and ceremonial site."

The ruins are beside what would have been the shoreline of a lake that filled with water about 11,000 years ago when the African monsoon moved north. It was used by nomads until 4,800 years ago, when the rainfall patterns shifted, and the area became arid and uninhabitable.

Five alignments radiate out from a central collection of stones. Beneath one was a carved rock resembling a cow standing upright.

The researchers report that they found the remains of several buried cattle, including a skeleton laid to rest in a clay-lined chamber. There were clusters from ancient hearths, and fragments of decorated ostrich eggs.

The stones are mute evidence of a vanished world — and a foretaste of the pyramid builders who would arrive 1,500 or 2,000 years later. Neolithic herders came to Nabta, probably from further south in



One of the megaliths found at a site in southern Egypt that scientists believe was built to mark the movement of the heavens

Africa, and used cattle in their rituals just as Masai tribesmen do today, says Prof Malville. Because Nabta was close to the Tropic of Cancer, the noon sun would be directly overhead and for a brief while each day, the standing stones would cast no shadows.

"These vertical sighting altitudes correspond to the zenith sun during the summer solstice," he says. "For many cultures in the tropics, the zenith sun has been a major event for millennia."

Some of the other alignments are still puzzling the archaeo-astronomers — scientists who specialise in interpreting patterns in stone left by vanished civilisations. Some of the megaliths would probably have been

submerged in the lake and may have "marked" the onset of the rainy season. "The organisation of these objects suggest a symbolic geometry that integrated death, water and the sun," says Prof Malville.

The discovery points to a world peopled by nomadic herders prepared to face daunting conditions.

The "high" culture of the Egyptians is traditionally thought to have been borrowed from Mesopotamia and Syria. But the forgotten stone-masons of Nabta clearly understood symbolism. Prof Malville and his colleagues believe that they, rather than the Assyrians or the Babylonians, may have triggered the social complexity that ended in the pyramids of the Pharaohs.







## Paperbacks

Desmond Christy

**The New Cambridge Shakespeare: King Edward III**, edited by Giorgio Melchiori (Cambridge, £6.95)

**KNOWN** in the trade as a "doubtful play", Edward III slips back into the canon (it appeared in a 1877 edition of Shakespeare's plays). Soaps and films get written by groups of writers. So, it seems, did many Elizabethan plays. A plotter would mine the sources — in this case Holinshed, Froissart and William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure* — and divers hands would set to work. Perhaps Will Shakespeare might knock off a few scenes? The one where Edward — who must be taught to control his passions and not abuse his sovereign power — tries to seduce the Countess of Salisbury, perhaps. Or the one in which the poet Lodowick is dragged in to abuse his talents by writing lines that might disarm the virtuous countess? The theme of the play, which is wrapped up in the period's attempt to revive chivalric values, is the education of princes — a Prince Edward, in particular — but what interests the modern reader most is how, beneath the royal propaganda, Shakespeare sniffs out all the ideological ambiguities and complexities of kings. But why, if Shakespeare wrote so much of Edward III, was his hand in it forgotten? Perhaps because the Countess of Salisbury gives the Scots such a hard time. Will would not have wanted James I to discover that the author of the king-pleasing Macbeth also wrote Edward III.

**The Hacienda: My Venezuelan Years**, by Lisa St Aubin de Terán (Virago, £6.99)

**SCHOOLGIRL**, who should be sitting her Cambridge entrance exams, is carried away to the Andes by an aristocrat and bank robber. To the impoverished plantation workers she was "la doña", wife of the master and hardly to be spoken to. Her husband virtually abandons her and things get scarier with every page you turn. A life even more gripping than her own novels.

**The Complete Eurovision Song Contest Competition**, by Paul Gambaccini, Tim Rice, Jonathan Rice and Tony Brown (Pavilion, £9.99)

**THE** Eurovision Widsen, although among all the tables there is no room for the lyrics of the songs. And, as if there were not enough authors already, you get a foreword by Terry Wogan, who even in print writes, "Aha, I can hear you cry...". Hang on a minute, I've got the lyrics of next year's winning entry: "Aha, I can hear you cry, can hear you cry, can hear you cry, Aha!" Nul points.

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Bainbridge focuses her fierce intelligence on a fictionalised account of the Crimean war. PHOTO: JOHN REARDON

## Short, sharp flick of the pen

Anne Chisholm

**Master George**  
by Beryl Bainbridge  
Duckworth 190pp £14.99

**IN HER** early books, as she has acknowledged more directly than most novelists care to do, Beryl Bainbridge wrote out of her family history and the people and places she knew. Then, with her most recent novels, *The Birthday Boys* and *Every Man For Himself*, she moved further back in time, plumbing not just her memory but the collective memory of her generation, raised on the historical legends of the 19th and early 20th century.

Her fierce intelligence was set alight by the story of Scott of the Antarctic and then by the Titanic; now, in a new and equally marvelous book, she has chosen to imagine an earlier national psychodrama, the Crimean war.

She avoids direct dealings with the two most celebrated Crimean war images, Florence Nightingale and the Charge of the Light Brigade, although both hover around her pages: cholera is a more fearful enemy than the Russian troops, and one character acquires a new mount from among the 200 stampeding horses of the Light Brigade, "their riders having perished in a charge along the north valley". No writer knows better than Bainbridge how to release the power of historical incident with such sharp, delicate flicks of the pen.

In this book Bainbridge, always the least padded or self-indulgent of writers, is at her most elliptical and economical. It is very short, with fewer than 200 small pages, and she has constructed it around six photographic images and three narrative voices. Each photograph freezes a moment in the story, which begins and ends with a death: the first in a brothel in Liverpool, the last on the battlefield of Inkerman. Not for the first time, Bainbridge's true subjects are love and mortality, the dark intricacies of sexual passion and "grin-grinning death", the only victor in the end on every battlefield.

The power of love is embodied in Myrtle, a young girl named after the orphanage from which she was taken as an act of charity by the Hardys, a prosperous Liverpool family. Myrtle's memory is blank and she prefers it that way, although George, the son of the house in whom she fastens all her hopes and dreams, tells her she could probably reclaim it if she tried: "... the memories might come back, like

the images that reared up on his photographic plates".

When George's father dies in a battle with a whore, both Myrtle and passing urchin, Pompey Jones, are caught up in George's conspiracy to hide the squalid truth, and both of them thereby acquire a hold over the family they appear to serve. Pompey, known to Myrtle as the "duck boy" after she sees him play a trick involving a duck in a basket, is an opportunist and a survivor who turns from Punch and Judy shows and fire-eating to photography and assisting George, a medical student, with experiments in vivisection. But Pompey's tricks have nasty consequences and whenever he appears death is not far behind.

Along with Dr Potter, a geologist and scholar, George's brother-in-law and the third voice in the book, Myrtle and Pompey arrive in the Crimea with George and his family on the eve of war.

It is the measure of Bainbridge's power that this unlikely expedition seems entirely plausible. George's uncles as a doctor. As cholera and war creep closer, the other women and children return home but Myrtle refuses to leave. Potter, against his better judgment, stays too.

She also knows how to spring surprises. It emerges that Myrtle, seemingly innocent love for Master George had made her his sexual prey; with his barren wife's collusion, she has borne their two children. Pompey has been George's occasional lover; the dedicated doctor and patient families is not what he seems.

This novel requires concentration and rereading. Bainbridge's genius is demanding and her used to tease readers is at its most pronounced, but her control of her material and her dazzling skill have never been more apparent. This may be her most ambitious and brilliantly realised book yet.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £13 contact CultureShop

## Stepping beyond the silver screen

J G Ballard

**Beneath Mulholland**  
Thoughts on Hollywood and its Ghosts  
by David Thomson  
Little Brown 300pp £20

**WHEN** the devil takes you up to a high place at the end of the century and offers you all the kingdom of the earth, you may well find yourself on Mulholland Drive. Climb the steep slopes of Laurel Canyon in your hired car and stop when you reach the road that runs along the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains. Try to ignore the nearby houses of Jack Nicholson and David Hockney, and recognise that you stand on the psychic watershed that separates two of the strangest man-made ecologies of our age.

To the north lies the San Fernando Valley, the dead lands of Burbank and Sherman Oaks, hell on earth to social historians but a powerful magnet for most of the people on this planet, who long to be part of its suburban dream.

The agency responsible for transforming this endless terrain of tract housing, small airports and TV stations into some of the most potent real estate in the collective unconscious lies behind you, in the fantasy mills of Hollywood. For some

reason, which neuroscientists may one day explain, the Hollywood film seems to endow with magic almost anything it touches, and easily ensnares even the most astute minds, as David Thomson shows in this hugely entertaining collection of essays and tales.

The ordeals of tired housewives in shabby apartments and bored drifters marooned on dusty filling stations, which would drive us out of our minds if filmed by David Lean or Richard Attenborough, become almost Homeric sagas in the eye of the Hollywood lens, turning the San Fernando Valley into a plain of drama and mystery.

According to a poem by Nabokov, Hollywood buried its bodies below Mulholland Drive, the ghosts of forgotten film stars and dreams that faded when the development money ran out. But their spectres fly at dusk, and positively blaze through Thomson's imagination. Long dead film actors and melodramas that apparently ended with the final credits come back to rework themselves into Thomson's lucid dreams.

Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray avoid the gas chamber after Double Indemnity, and later commit suicide on an ocean cruise, burdened by their guilty memories. James Dean survives his car crash and goes on to marry Liz Taylor, stars in Chinatown and takes the

wheel from Teddy Kennedy in the Chaparral death race.

Played against the silver screen inside Thomson's head, these fantasies seem even more real than their originals. But were their originals ever real in the first place? Thomson, born in London in 1941, saw his first film at the age of five, and in many ways has remained in his seat in the stalls ever since.

For me, he is the greatest of today's film writers, author of the rightly acclaimed *Biographical Dictionary of Film*, one of the best film books ever written and full of quirky and unexpected judgments that linger annoyingly in the mind, like his belief that Cary Grant is the supreme film actor. In his introduction to *Beneath Mulholland*, he says of *Suspects*, his celebrated book of "after-tales", that it was prompted by his sense that in the best movies there is always a further story itching to be uncovered. Exactly what did happen to Steve McQueen and Ali MacGraw in Mexico after *The Getaway*? As for Lee Marvin in *Point Blank*, did he simply fade back into his dream of death?

Most films last as long as a lunch, preciously little time to create a completely self-contained world. In a sense Thomson's career has been devoted to filling in these empty dramatic spaces, the hints of darker possibilities that hover in

the site corridors of even the tightest dreams. *Beneath Mulholland* is an imaginary film studio, a vast cutting-room where Thomson can splice and remix to his heart's content.

In many ways Thomson is the last film fan, just old enough to have seen a large part of Hollywood's output when it was first released. But his criticism is untouched by any over-sweet nostalgia. He is unswerving about the realities of Hollywood. "The script," he says, "is the literary form for a society giving up literacy."

Thomson deplores the advent of special effects and the clear implication that the traditional *raison d'être* of film, the magic of even the most mundane of invented worlds, no longer works. "No one," he says, "believes in a picture for the story it tells."

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When George's father dies in a battle with a whore, both Myrtle and passing urchin, Pompey Jones, are caught up in George's conspiracy to hide the squalid truth, and both of them thereby acquire a hold over the family they appear to serve. Pompey, known to Myrtle as the "duck boy" after she sees him play a trick involving a duck in a basket, is an opportunist and a survivor who turns from Punch and Judy shows and fire-eating to photography and assisting George, a medical student, with experiments in vivisection. But Pompey's tricks have nasty consequences and whenever he appears death is not far behind.

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
April 19 1998

## Nature on the rack

John Vidal

**Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature**  
by Linda Lear  
Allen Lane/The Penguin Press  
634pp £25

**Silent Spring**  
by Rachel Carson  
Penguin 320pp £7.99

**WHEN** Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962 the United States chemical industry, the press, academia, and many eminent politicians and scientists turned vile and punitious. Her critique of the widespread misuse of poisonous chemicals was interpreted as a kick in the groin of Western progress.

The middle-aged woman who had spent a virtuous life peering into rock pools, writing occasional magazine pieces and editing government tracts became overnight an establishment she-devil. Carson was accused of being a communist, of being emotional and using scare tactics. She was "biased", "amateur" and "had abandoned science".

She was none of these, but the ideologies, the scientific establishment and the industry spokesmen queued up to vilify her. *Silent Spring* was described as "more poisonous than the chemicals she attacked", and Carson was dismissed as fanatical. The industry mounted a massive PR campaign. The US, it was

## Milan's mysteries

Laura Cumming

**Identity**  
by Milan Kundera  
Faber 163pp £12.99

**MILAN** Kundera's new novel opens in a French seaside town, out of season. Two lovers have an assignation at the hotel. The woman arrives the night before, suffers a nightmare and goes out for a walk in the morning. The man searches for her on the beach, a margin of bleached sand bordered by a long sea-wall. The atmosphere is doleful and tense. It could be the start of a novel by Marguerite Duras.

Spying his lover on the shoreline about to be crushed by a sand-yacht, Jean-Marc rushes forward with tears in his eyes. The figure turns towards him. "The woman he had thought was Chantal became old, ugly, pathetically other." Mistaking his lover's identity, Jean-Marc suddenly doubts his own. The crisis is existential. It could be a scene from a novel by Camus.

Kundera is now technically French himself. He emigrated from Prague more than 20 years ago, is a French national and writes in French. Yet the France of this novel is deliberately derived from literature. Every scene seems curiously familiar — the characters discuss religion and death over red wine, like intellectuals in Sartre or De Beauvoir. The mute misconnection between the lovers has been Kundera's constant theme. What Kundera evokes is the persistent, hallucinatory sense of *déjà vu* in the reader, the feeling that we may have been here before.

In her nightmare Chantal dreams of a miserable early marriage. When Jean-Marc finally meets up with her, she is still affected by memories of which he knows nothing. Instead, she accounts for her sadness by saying that men have ceased to admire her on the street. Moved, Jean-Marc begins to send Chantal anonymous love letters, signed only CDB.

Rather than boast about these billets-doux, Chantal hides them in her underwear drawer. Suspecting that she conceals them in hope of some tryst with this secret admirer, Jean-Marc becomes the jealous cuckold of his own tender prank.

Kundera transforms this fragment of French farce into a penetrating meditation on the mystery of identity. Are we as we seem to those who know us best — or a cache of selves secreted in some private drawer? Can we be identified through our faces, our handwriting, our history? What if these can be as easily mistaken as they are by Jean-Marc and Chantal? Is our identity a continuum or a series of personae that change with the blink of an eye? Kundera keeps these questions, hovering in the air like hummingbirds. Jean-Marc has often perceived the way that Chantal's

said, would collapse without its chemical industry and Carson was accused of putting the free world at risk of hunger and disease. The more they protested, the more the public understood Carson's case that the chemical industry was effectively out of control.

As her meticulous biographer, Linda Lear, notes, Carson exposed two raw nerves. By deliberately using the rhetoric of the cold war to persuade readers of the urgency of the message, she forced industrialists into a debate they neither wanted nor expected. While there was nothing scientifically new in what she wrote about the interconnectedness of nature, her tone and sharpness were luminous. *Silent Spring* led directly to what is today

The second was gender. *Silent Spring* was one of the first social critiques of modern industrial behaviour and Carson was in all ways an outsider. Her vision included past and future generations, other species and unquantifiables. Life was not all arrow-straight modernity, as industry, governments and scientists would have it, but full of messy human values and sensitivity. While she never linked the lot of postwar Western women with that of nature, others did and the early US feminists took great courage from her stance.

But was she a saint, as Lear would seem to make her in this exhaustive hagiography that is

swamped at times with tedious circumstantial detail of a life that only became really interesting near the end? Vulnerable and conscientious, yes. Passionate and determined, of course. But two good non-fiction works and a few magazine pieces do not warrant uncritical adulation for her writing.

Happily Penguin has reissued *Silent Spring* to coincide with Lear's welcome biography and the two are best read together. There is barely a sentence of the original that does not apply today, but the pity is that no one has been commissioned to write a new introduction to consider Carson's legacy.

Carson, who was dying of cancer even as *Silent Spring* was being published, would be reaching for her typewriter. For all the clamour of environmentalism and all the woeal words of governments, the situation is no better.

poisoning communities and farm-workers. Great swathes of farmland are little more than ecological deserts, bird numbers are declining everywhere, almost every river in Britain is poisoned with man-made chemicals, cancer mysteriously afflicts almost one in three people in industrial societies and, looming, we have the heading rush into the unknowns of genetic engineering.

Moreover, the chemical industry, more powerful than ever, uses precisely the same techniques and language to destroy and discredit its critics today. It's all very depressing, but we must trust that people will listen to the other brave Carsons who are emerging.



Milan Kundera... problems of identity

of a miserable early marriage. When Jean-Marc finally meets up with her, she is still affected by memories of which he knows nothing. Instead, she accounts for her sadness by saying that men have ceased to admire her on the street. Moved, Jean-Marc begins to send Chantal anonymous love letters, signed only CDB.

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expression, indeed her whole character, seems to change inside the advertising company where she works. She has no patience with his anxiety, knowing that disguise is the best uniform for the office. But when she goes on a business trip to London, Chantal is literally taken for someone else.

By now you have realised that Kundera's characters may not be quite as typically French as they seem. The head of the advertising agency, a former Trotskyite who crabs the slogans of the sixties to sell disposable nappies, keeps his staff in rigid thrall like a Soviet commissar. At some point Kundera's narrative has gone down a rabbit hole and emerged in another fictional country altogether.

John Updike once observed of Kundera that he was a child of the Enlightenment, for whom mystery occurred only on the sexual or psychological plane. Certainly, identity has no more numerous cootens than any of Kundera's earlier novels. But it does celebrate a human kind of mystery, a poignant faith in the heart over the head. Chantal's identity may be mutable, but her essence is what Jean-Marc must continue to love.

## As bad as he gets

Phillip Horne

**Jack Nicholson: The Life and Times of an Actor on the Edge**  
by Peter Thompson  
Mainstream Publishing 304pp £15.99

**HOW** do we "know", or think we know, or how does Peter Thompson think he knows, that starlet Amanda de Cadenet, 21, actually had an affair with megastar Jack Nicholson, 57, in London in the summer of 1994? She stated publicly that "There's nothing going on". The ex-editor of the *Sunday Mirror* informs us, however, that privately she "admitted the affair" in a letter to her estranged husband, John Taylor, boss of *Duran Duran*. "The rock star promptly contacted me and said: 'I'm interested in this', whence it was retrieved by an eager member of the LA paparazzi."

This is the world of tabloid "sleaze", all right, in its apotheosis as star biography, and Peter Thompson, veteran chronicler of Robert Maxwell, Sami Ferguson and Princess Diana, has waded through it with a more than Boswellian devotion, in order to bring us his bulletin from the world of Hollywood's currently most honoured actor.

Nicholson is a close supporter of President Clinton, but unlike his country's leader has never troubled to deny having inhaled, or even smoked, some excessive costs in the past. Nicholson, who calls himself "Dr Evil", seems to have made. Part of the cost is tabloid headlines and books like Thompson's, though it is less phillistine about the films than one might expect. The most painful thing to contemplate here, however, is perhaps Nicholson's artistic loss of the "Edge" in Thompson's title.

The man who became a star with *Easy Rider* is perhaps the most

seductive surviving representative of the 1960s, or at least of some of its fantasies, and his Byronic policy of non-hypocrisy, of open avowal and grinning, sociable irresponsibility, dares most critics. Moreover, his generation, often his friends, are now in charge of the Hollywood asylum, and he can hardly claim any longer to be "at odds with the establishment".

This book reminds you quite how many of Nicholson's early starring roles were what one may call sexual parts, associated with the "sexual revolution". And from *Five Easy Pieces* (1970) onwards, a film written and directed by friends, Nicholson has had parts written to fit him.

Correspondingly, he is said to bring his work home, as that for instance during the *Martin* black comedy *Prizzi's Honor* (1985) his then companion Anjelica Huston said she found "too much of the himself in him when he came home". Once so much feedback has got into the system, and the actor's life has become both a commodity and a medium of publicity, we start to see the showbiz cliché of the hall of mirrors.

The dirt Thompson dredges through — the illegitimacy revelation (that Nicholson's "sister" was really his mother), the Roman Polanski rape case, the associations with Heidi Fleiss and other unavowed, the paternity suits — strongly suggest some excessive costs in the past. Nicholson, who calls himself "Dr Evil", seems to have made. Part of the cost is tabloid headlines and books like Thompson's, though it is less phillistine about the films than one might expect. The most painful thing to contemplate here, however, is perhaps Nicholson's artistic loss of the "Edge" in Thompson's title.

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